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STATESMAN AND NATION

The Week-end Review

Vol. XXIII. No. 585 [Incorporating THE ATHENÆUM] SATURDAY, MAY 9, 1942 [Registered at the G.P.O. as a newspaper] SIXPENCE

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MADAGASCAR IN THE STRATEGICAL PLAN

THAT the Japanese might seize Madagascar in order to threaten our sea-road to Suez, Bombay, and the Persian Gulf had been obvious for some time. The War Cabinet was alive to the danger, but it restrained the impulse to strike first, until Laval's coming to power removed the last of its scruples in dealing with Vichy. It is clear that if Pétain could hand over Indo-China to the Japs, Laval would not hesitate to give them Madagascar. In fact, two Japanese admirals paid a business visit to Vichy only the other day. It is satisfactory that the United States, though not actively participating, has gone out of its way to publish its approval of the British occupation, and to warn Vichy that if it drifts into active military measures on the side of the Axis, it will have to deal with all the United Nations.

The British expedition which has been planned with adequate naval support is a typical "combined operation," involving parachute troops as well as land forces. Very wisely, no French troops are included. The capture of the naval base of Diego Suarez, which Joffre fortified, may give it a little trouble, but the French troops in the island are not numerous, while the native levies are said to be of poor quality. It has no doubt been foreseen that there are other islands in the Indian Ocean which might suit the Japanese as bases for commerce-destruction equally well — Comoro, Mauritius and the Seychelles.

This defensive measure, undeniably necessary as it is, has the unfortunate effect of making it rather less easy to carry out a large-scale diversion on the Continent this summer. That is always the penalty of a strategy of dispersal. There are theoretically two ways of defending the Suez Canal and the Middle East. One is by local measures at each threatened spot, a method which uses up much shipping and scatters both our men and our machines. The other way is to ignore the danger at the outposts and to employ all our strength in an effort to destroy the enemy at the centre of his power. This, in concert with the Russians, might have been feasible this year. But we can hardly combine it with operations that range from the Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean. A choice had to be made. Whether deliberately, or under the pressure of events, the decision in favour of dispersal was taken long ago. Given this conception of strategy, the Madagascar expedition was inevitable. It has, however, the inconvenience that it diminishes our available naval strength in other seas. A minor operation of the same kind should be undertaken at Djibouti. It would be very much more humane to take it than to starve it out, as we are doing.

The fragmentary news from Burma means that everything is finished there, save the last rearguard actions. It is no longer possible for the British and Chinese forces to give any support to each other. The Japanese are established in the ruins of Mandalay and Lashio, while the British are fighting their way towards the mule-track which leads over the mountains to Assam, and the Chinese in their retreat over their famous road have now reached their own territory. The only lasting achievement of this defence of Burma will be the thorough destruction of the oil-fields. The defenders were never in adequate force and had to face a largely hostile population, but the fatal disability under which they suffered was that the Japs had command from first to last both of the air and the sea. The loss of Burma is humiliating and its oil was useful, but what really matters is the loss of the only road through which a large volume of munitions can be sent to China. Eventually the best hope of defeating Japan seemed to lie in an offensive by a well-equipped Chinese army stiffened by American or Indian technical troops. That prospect has now vanished. The Chinese are, however, behaving with great spirit and have just carried out a series of ambitious raids on Shanghai, Nanking and other occupied towns. The failure of our strategical thinking in this instance is obvious. The proper course, which was considered but rejected, was clearly to abandon the Malay Peninsula and even Singapore, in order to make sure of Rangoon and the Burma Road.

This whole problem of our strategical direction was raised again in the Lords on Tuesday. An immense weight of experience was there brought to support the case first stated by Sir Edward Grigg and Lord Hankey for the appointment of a full-time professional chairman, whether sailor or soldier, who would focus the work of a combined military, naval and air force general staff. His duty would be (1) to draw up plans for future operations, which he would submit on behalf of all three Services to his political chief, Mr. Churchill, as Minister of Defence, for the final decision of the War Cabinet, and (2) to obtain a professional judgment on problems or *desiderata* which the Minister of Defence might submit to him. He should also (3) be empowered to bring plans for the manufacture of arms into relation to strategy; arms must be made to fit future plans. This scheme for the organisation of our strategical thinking should not be taken as an attack on any individual or on any of the three Services, which hitherto have worked independently with General Ismay as *liaison* officer. It recognises for the first time that all modern warfare is now three-dimensional. If the right man can be found, our confidence in the conduct of the war would stand on a surer footing.

India's "No"

The meeting of the full representative committee of the Indian National Congress, a body of over 150 delegates, makes it clear that in the act of rejecting the British offer this party has again submitted, with few exceptions, to Mr. Gandhi's leadership. Mephistopheles was the spirit who always denied, but this saint has the same instinctive tendency to negation. He has dismissed the British offer as "ridiculous," and refused once again to look at anything less than an instant grant of full "independence." After endorsing the rejection, Congress went on to proclaim an attitude of "non-violent non-co-operation" in the anticipated Japanese invasion. In India alone two negatives do not make a positive. This means that Indians will neither embarrass nor assist the British defence, but they are to oppose the Japanese—negatively. It is not quite clear what this means, in the concrete—probably the stubborn refusal of all assistance and passive disobedience to all Japanese orders. As Mr. Gandhi put it, Indians must not give even

a glass of water to an invader. In that case they will probably be tied in bundles and bayoneted.

Mr. Rajagopalachari, who had induced his party in the dissolved provincial Council of Madras to declare in principle for the acceptance of the Pakistan idea, was censured and repudiated, after securing the support of only four delegates. He has now resigned from the Working Committee of Congress and may try to form a Coalition Ministry in Madras with the Muslim League—in that province a very small minority. His stand for conciliation did, however, induce Dr. Azad to suggest that five Congressmen should meet five delegates of the Muslim League to discuss a settlement. This looks like a hopeful gesture, but can it lead to an agreement, or even to a meeting, so long as Congress rejects Pakistan in principle?

The breakdown of the negotiations in Delhi has for the time being worsened the whole outlook. The chance of resumed negotiations might come, if and when the Japs actually attack in force. Then, when the danger became imminent, a proposal, stripped of all constitutional subtleties, to set up a Committee of Public Safety might possibly succeed.

New Order versus the People

A neutral, lately asked to describe the New Order, said: "There is nothing more orderly than a prison: its inhabitants are under strict supervision; they have little to eat; they cannot do what they like, go where they like, say what they like. Europe to-day is a prison." It is, however, a prison where the captives are in a constant state of mutiny, and the warders practice the brutality of the frightened. Eighteen Norwegians shot last week in reprisal for two German policemen killed from ambush. The eighteen were not the killers, they were picked out of a concentration camp where they had been for months. Herr Tunberger, a Swedish correspondent in Norway, wrote last month to his paper that the long list of death sentences, the church and school conflict, the New Order of Quisling had all left their mark; the whole atmosphere was more embittered and the hostility of the opponents more irreconcilable than formerly. It is indeed small wonder that Norway finds a régime unalluring whose brightest idea for the future, contributed by Senator Otte, Terboven's economic chief, is that the Norwegians should give up seafaring and overseas trade. Twenty-two Dutchmen were executed this week, for forming an anti-Nazi organisation. Belgium has been warned that the penalty for helping escaped prisoners or airmen is death: many such cases have occurred lately. In Czechoslovakia, nominally *gleichgeschaltet*, the German press finds it necessary to thunder at artists and scientists for "an indifferent attitude to world-shaking events" and to upbraid students forced into the Nazi Youth, "Students especially are colourless. Their activity is not activity, but vegetation . . . uninspired—without ideological purpose." At the faintest hope of liberation the people rise: the townsfolk fought the Germans for four days after the Commando raid on St. Nazaire. The *Feldcommandant* has ordered that 10 per cent. of the men in the fighting districts should be shot. The courage of the active resisters, like the Dutch organisers of disobedience, the writers, printers and distributors of the clandestine press in all the occupied countries, is almost beyond belief. One slip means death, and they carry on their work under the very noses of the Germans. There is even the sparkle of dangerous fun about some of it. When the Vichy Government plastered France with its pious slogan: "Travail, Famille, Patrie," the Paris posters had pasted over them "Travail forcé, loin de la Famille, contre la Patrie."

Home Front *(by an Industrial Correspondent)*

Mr. Lyttelton seems to be getting on reasonably fast with his appointed job of making the best of war production without touching any of its fundamental defects. He is doing what he can, within the limitations of the existing system of control, to delegate more authority from the centre to the regional bodies, to ensure closer co-operation between small and middling firms in each area, and to reduce as much as possible the waste of resources due to men and machines standing idle in one factory while another is waiting for components which they could be used to provide. He is also, I understand, now beginning to tackle the immense problem of "spoilt work," which is due partly to the inevitable dilution of labour and the shortage of highly skilled workers and supervisors, but also partly to faults in the working drawings provided and in the system of inspection. Draughtsmen and inspectors, as well as skilled machine operators, are in short supply; and the result is a good deal of confusion in both the departments responsible for design and in the A.I.D., which has the job of inspection. Nothing is more discouraging to workers who have been going all out on urgent war work than to have their products rejected *en masse*, not through any fault of their own, but because something has gone wrong in the drawing department or because an inspector has taken a pedantic rather than a realistic view. It is, of course, necessary to be meticulous where faults may endanger human lives, or cause the destruction of guns which it will be hard to replace. But many workers hold that inspection often goes beyond this, and that perfectly effective products are rejected when they have been made on machines that involve some slight departure from normal specifications. Certainly, in some big war factories, the proportion of spoilt work is very high; and it is good news that Mr. Lyttelton is turning his attention to this aspect of his new job.

* * *

The advance rumours of what is to be done about the regulation of restaurant prices are, I hope, too bad to be true. Of course, a limitation of prices to anything like 5*s.* a meal would mean the closing or complete transformation of the luxury restaurants—if it meant what it said. But it would have been better to leave the entire business of luxury eating and drinking severely alone, or simply to cut down supplies without regulating prices, than to introduce a system which allows the restaurants to go on charging as much as before, provided they call the greater part of the bill something other than the cost of the food. The public opinion, which the limitation of prices is presumably meant to placate, will be either outraged or cynically amused by a plan which gets back on entrance fees, cover charges, and the like, what is nominally taken away by fixing a maximum price for the food. It would be sensible to take over the luxury dining places and reopen them as British Restaurants, serving simple meals—with a modest extra charge for a band and a hop, where there is a popular demand for such accessories.

* * *

The Bill by virtue of which the Ministry of Works and Buildings becomes the Ministry of Works and Planning and receives the powers hitherto exercised by the Ministry of Health under the Town and Country Planning Act is an ugly duckling that nobody loves—not even its sponsors. It ought to go either farther or not so far. Housing and Town and Country Planning ought not to be divided; and if any planning is seriously meant the Ministry which is to take charge of it ought to have power to control the location of industry and the use of land. This last matter, we are told, must await the second report of the Uthwatt Committee and also the report of Lord Justice Scott's Committee which is studying the problem of rural land and location of industry in rural areas. If these things have to be left over, why legislate at all now? So ridiculous a mouse as the present Bill, far from reassuring public opinion, only induces it to smell a rat.

* * *

I am glad to see the House of Commons demanding publication of the names of those firms and individuals whose anti-social activities were put officially on record in the Report of the Auditor-General to which I referred last week. Incidentally, these official disclosures are among the many reasons why I, for one, am a great deal more inclined to accept as a true general picture of the situation the remarks made by Mr. Davenport in his recent articles rather than the more seemly, even ascetic, picture of the Directory of Directors suggested by some of his assailants. Admittedly Mr. Davenport was verbally rash, and admittedly the cases cited by the Auditor-General are "isolated instances." So is Mount Everest, but it is so high because it is part of the gigantic pile of dirt known as the Himalayas. And I do not believe that if scrounging from the Government were not a matter of everyday business practice, these particular scroungers would have calmly got away with such a gigantic swag. And really what pious tosh some people do talk! I have before me the letter of an inspector of taxes who writes regretting that his official position prevents him from revealing facts that would amply support Mr. Davenport. And why wouldn't they? Look at the spectacular advertising of goods that can be bought and all paid for out of E.P.T. Look at the numerous opportunities for evasion and incentives to luxurious spending provided by E.P.T. Why pretend that these opportunities are not exploited by business men in a fashion which, as Mr. Davenport suggested, draws unfavourable comment from workers in the factories?

GOD ONLY KNOWS

Rugby Tories, who ran Sir Claude Holbrook's campaign, were flabbergasted by the result. Sir Claude, asked the cause of his defeat, said: "God only knows—I don't."

DEAR SIR CLAUDE,—Does it really need a special knowledge of the ways of Providence to understand why the electors of Rugby preferred a forcible Independent to a respectable representative of the Tory Party? The same thing occurred, you will have noticed, at Wallasey, and before that at Grantham. Surely the reason is not mysterious. Put the question the other way round. Can you suggest a single good reason why anyone should ever again vote for the Party of Stanley Baldwin and Mr. Chamberlain? It is true that all of us of every party and no party, share in the guilt of this war by our acts of commission or omission. But really the responsibility is not equal. Your Party has been continuously in power and almost continuously in office during all the twenty years of complacent folly that separated the last war from this war. And it was these people in power who broke the fine promises after the last war and scrapped the aspirations of humanity rather than give up any of their own privileges and prejudices. The story is familiar enough. Our statesmen refused, when they had Europe in their hands, to do anything constructive with it; they deliberately rejected the opportunity to create an international force to supersede private armies; they spent huge sums on arms, but still left us disarmed when war came; they were contemptuous of democratic Germany when friendship was possible, but kowtowed to the Nazis whom they regarded as the bulwark against Bolshevism. Do you want me to remind you of your Party's support of Japan in China, of Mussolini in Abyssinia, of Franco in Spain, and of Hitler in one country after another in Europe? Now the blood of millions flows to reconquer the worlds that you thought could go to Fascism without any damage to your interests. Why should the soldier or the worker vote for a continuation of your ghastly blundering in diplomacy, in war and in peace-making?

ADVERTISED GOODS.—The fact that goods made of raw materials in short supply owing to war conditions are advertised in this paper should not be taken as an indication that they are necessarily available for export.

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It was the people whom you ask us to support that promised us a better world after the last holocaust: twenty years of unemployment, of fake elections with red letters and inflation scares and lies about collective security do not make for confidence. Many of your fellow constituents will die because of your short-sighted selfishness; you really can't expect their votes as well as their lives.

That is only the most superficial aspect of the revolt that is now going on in the constituencies. The revolt is against the whole antiquated system, against inequality and frustration, not only against a particular group of men. Have you noticed that each successful candidate now talks in the same strain whatever label he gives himself? The people are dictating policy, not the candidate or the Party. They even dictate it, comically enough, to Lord Halifax, who has now discovered that this is a "people's war"! Well, that's the first point. A long series of ghastly disasters have driven home the contrast between Chinese and Russians fighting for their own soil and Imperial armies fighting in occupied territories for the right to own the soil that belongs to others. After all, it is Conservatives who have jeopardised the Empire, not those whom they derided for saying that the League was the only way of security. If you had been rather more closely in touch with common people you would have discovered that they care little for the Empire. It is Russia that thrills them. They know what they mean when they say they want to make this a people's war. And they want to win it. They are convinced by their own observation that the vested interests whom you would represent in Parliament hinder production and they are deeply worried about the settlement of this war. They are not deceived by the pretence that war will be cured by being savage to Germans: all that was said in the last war, and it was the people who shouted loudest for revenge who gave the Nazis their chance when the time came. And they don't trust promises of a New Order from people who have made a pretty comfortable thing out of this disorder.

What are they to do? The Labour Party was founded to do this job. But, for reasons that are familiar in the story of Social Democracy, it disappoints; it becomes increasingly itself a part of the established order. And now it has tied itself by the Party truce, so that its followers in Wallasey and Rugby must vote for an Independent in order to vote Socialist. The Communist Party would seem the lineal heir to the Labour Party. Perhaps it is; in any case it grows in membership and in influence. But apart from its other drawbacks, it too is now supporting the electoral truce. It follows that those who are frustrated, but not disciplined, must look for their outlet in the Independent candidate. He may be a an individualist and powerful orator like W. J. Brown. He may be an obviously sincere Socialist. Mr. Reakes, gathered much support from Sir Richard Acland because Sir Richard's appeal to Socialism as a religion, as a morality against an expediency, touches a cord in our national life that has been for long neglected since the days of Keir Hardie. In any case the elector will vote progressive, "Left," "Socialist"—call it what you will. And he will no longer respect the Party truce or be affected in his vote by combined letters from Mr. Churchill, Mr. Attlee and Sir Archibald Sinclair.

Many responsible people see the danger of our politics becoming "atomised"; some, including Priestley, Acland and Tom Wintringham have produced a nine-point programme which could be accepted, in part at least, by most "progressives"; they urge that a Committee be formed in every constituency to see that a responsible and progressive candidate is ready to stand when a by-election occurs. I doubt if the 1941 Committee and its allies can ever represent, politically, a mass following. But they can and do speak for a mass feeling of frustration. This, I think, was realised by Mr. Greenwood whose comments on the Priestley-Acland declaration were kindly. Mr. Greenwood knows that local Labour Parties will rally to such Independents, whatever is said in Transport House. Perhaps he expects fireworks about the political truce at the Whitsun Conference of the Labour Party. The rank and file wants the beginning of a transference of power during the war. Mr. Greenwood, I guess, feels a happier and more honest man out of office.

Politics present a more difficult problem than the electorate's failure to return Sir Claude Holbrook to Westminster. That problem is how to utilise for the world's happiness this growing mood of frustration and prevent its being exploited by the Fascists. They will not call themselves that now, but that is what some who hope to ride to power actually are. The progressive forces want a leader. Perhaps they have one in the Government now? We shall see. To join these forces of the Left together so that they pull the same way and do not dissipate themselves is the problem which must be solved if democracy is indeed to prove the victor in this war. The first step is for the Labour Party to renounce the electoral truce.

COAL

THE Government, we are told, is thinking hard about the problem of the coal mines. It has had submitted to it by the Mineworkers' Federation, with the support of the National Council of Labour, a plan for transferring the mines, for the duration, to a joint council of miners and mine-owners, *plus* Government representatives; it is cogitating upon this plan. When it has done cogitating, it will tell us what, if anything, it proposes to do about improving coal output, and in the meantime it will continue its attempts to bully the miners into producing more coal under the existing conditions.

This sort of thing would make us laugh if the subject had not ceased to be humorous twenty years ago. The case for public ownership of the coal mines was made out convincingly years and years ago, war or no war; and after more than two years' experience of confusion and mismanagement under war conditions, it is startling to find that anyone can still be found to defend the existing system. Indeed, very few can, except the mineowners themselves and a handful of persons who have so bitter a hostility to Socialism in all its forms that they would sooner have the coal industry break down utterly than make any concession to the principle of public ownership. The main body of opinion in all classes has been convinced long ago that the mining industry will never be run in the national interest until it is brought under public management. There are differences about the form which the new management ought to take; but we doubt if anyone except the mineowners and the supporters of the Individualist Bookshop would shed a tear over the passing of private enterprise in the coal industry.

How, then, are we to explain the curious fact that the Mineworkers' Federation and the National Council of Labour, both committed for many years to the advocacy of public ownership, are at present asking instead for the conduct of the industry by a joint body consisting mainly of owners and workers? The miners, when they drew up their scheme, said quite openly why they were taking this line. It was because they did not see any hope of pressing for public ownership without exposing themselves to a charge of destroying the national unity in time of war. Presumably the National Council of Labour, in supporting the miners' scheme, is actuated by the same motives. At any rate, we hope it is; for the only alternative explanation would appear to be that the Labour Party and the Trades Union Congress have fallen so much in love with the joint councils which are now at work all over the industrial system that they have ceased to wish for public ownership even of the industry which has always stood first in their list for the application of this principle.

The proposal to put the coal mines under a joint council of owners and miners has nothing to recommend it. The first essential for improving the efficiency of the industry under the present conditions is that the body in control of it shall be in a position to ignore past divisions of ownership and to treat the entire industry both regionally and nationally, as a single unit. The controlling body must be free to shut down pits without consideration of the financial effects on particular owners, in order to concentrate the available man-power at the points at which most coal can be produced. It must be free to ignore barriers between pit and pit, based upon separate ownerships, to arrange for joint pumping and maintenance schemes, to break contracts which are contrary to the national interest, to rationalise completely the methods of coal distribution, and in general to behave as owner in a full sense, without being held back by any consideration of the effects of its measures on the relative values of the separate properties after the war. It cannot do this if it is to be composed largely of men who expect to be the post-war owners of these separate properties, or indeed if it has to regard itself as a mere wartime caretaker, under an obligation to hand back the properties to a number of different owners on the return of peace.

The case for public ownership of the coal mines stands on a different footing from the case for Socialism generally, or for any widespread nationalisation of productive industry. Coal is natural and not artificial capital; and, given modern technique and the modern scale of demand for coal, it is plainly necessary from the national point of view to regard the mineral itself as a national asset to be controlled in the public interest. This has been recognised, up to a point, by the transfer to the State of the ownership of mineral rights, which is due to take effect on July 1 of this year. But this instalment of nationalisation is robbed of all practical effect by the fact that it does not allow of any interference with existing leases; so that for a long time the separate colliery concerns will be in a position to carry on precisely as before. What is needed is to follow up the taking over of the royalties, here and now, with the taking over of the mines, not merely for the war period, but once and for all.

Probably the best system of mine-management would be a regional system under strong national co-ordination designed to prevent uneconomic distribution. The marketing, as well as the production, ought to be taken over; and the control ought to be vested in some sort of Coal Mining Commission or Board, analogous to the Central Electricity Board. By all means let miners or former mineowners sit as members of such a Board, if they are the best and most capable men. Nobody wants the coal mines, under public ownership, to be run on the lines of a civil service department, or under day-to-day Treasury control. But a Board including former miners and former mineowners is a very different thing from a Board *representing* miners and existing mineowners who would be bound to have in mind not only the service of the public interest, but also the future value of their own property as a source of profit.

If Dr. Dalton and Mr. Attlee and, finally, all the gentlemen of the War Cabinet did actually pluck up courage to nationalise the coal mines, no section of public opinion that matters would turn a hair. Indeed, that solution of the problem would be popular with nearly everybody, whereas no alternative solution will convince anybody that you are taking the job seriously. The public is fully prepared to be rationed with fuel, and to shiver next winter if that is necessary for winning the war. But it does not like being rationed while no one dares stand up to the mineowners, and to go on shivering needlessly because the coal industry is allowed to remain the idiotic muddle that it is. Having accepted rationing, despite the clamour of private interests, the public will expect Labour leaders in the Government to do their partof the job

Bring out your dead
PAPER

and insist on putting the production and distribution of coal on an efficient basis. If they fail to do this, the rationing system, which depends on public goodwill, will not work, and will not deserve to work, however well designed its details may be and however competently it may be administered. How can the public be expected to trust Ministers whom it can see shivering, not with cold, but with fear at the disapproval of a small but influential vested interest?

And again . . . Really, Mr. Lawther; really, Mr. Middleton; really, Sir Walter Citrine; really, you who are supposed to be leaders of Labour and protagonists of Socialistic principles, what are you doing in this *galère*? Why should you, of all people, want to put the vested interests in to control the coal industry, while you continue to protest against the Controls which represent the vested interests elsewhere? Does it really make all the difference to you if the vested interest of the miners secures representation alongside the vested interest of the owners? If so, if that is your attitude, whose leaders are you? Not the people's; the people is sick of the vested interests one and all, and is looking for leaders who are not afraid to brush them aside.

THE DEFENCE OF INDIA

[The writer of this article, Captain G. T. Garratt, was killed with eighteen other officers and men in this country last week. Geoffrey Garratt was an old contributor of this journal. We publish elsewhere an appreciation by Mr. Edward Thompson. Of all those with whom we have worked in a large number of causes—over Abyssinia, India, Spain and others nearer home—we can think of no one more unassuming, more efficient, more courageous, or more practical. He was an expert on matters of agriculture and had much to do with framing Labour's land policy. There are not many to take Garratt's place. For ourselves we lose an invaluable contributor and friend. It will interest many people, and will do no harm to-day, to reveal that Capt. Garratt was the author of the much-discussed article entitled *The Silent Revolution* we published on February 14.—ED. *N.S. & N.*]

WHEN the history of this war comes to be written it may be that our blackest moment will not be connected with Dunkirk, Crete, or Norway, but with Mr. Amery's first speech on the Indian estimates. This advertised to the world our failure to organise the resources and man-power of India, and probably altered the whole war strategy of Germany and Japan. We had, in fact, done less than in the first year of the 1914 war. It will not be made better by recriminations, but it is impossible to understand recent Indian history, or the failure of the Cripps mission, without knowing something of the frustration and bitterness which every intelligent Indian feels when he thinks about the army.

Probably the last hope of India taking her proper place in the war disappeared with the 1931 election. One of the many casualties of that unhappy affair was the Indian Minister of Defence. This obvious reform had the support of nearly every delegate to the Round Table Conference. If that concession had been granted, as it nearly was in 1930, we might now have an Indian army drawn from all parts of the country, a better balanced, far larger and more efficient force. Ramsay MacDonald was too busy safeguarding his position in the new Government to worry about such minor matters. The Conference wilted immediately after the election. The India Office once more took control. Indian defence remained in the hands of the old gang at Simla, the successors of those responsible for the Mesopotamian fiasco.

I have always found Indian politicians intensely interested in army affairs, and completely realist about them. Nehru is far keener on modernising the army than on Indianising it. Dr. Moonji, of the Hindu Mahasabha, is fanatically keen about organising the man-power of the Deccan. It is unfortunate that Gandhi's pacifism should have confused the issue. His outlook is that of a Jain and not of a typical Hindu. Other Indian politicians criticise the Army Department and grumble at their estimates. This is not because they do not want an army, but because they believe that it is not being organised in the interests of India. It is useless to blame them for being destructive critics. They have never been given a chance of being anything else. It is worth considering what they chiefly dislike about the present arrangements.

The main objection is that the army, for the last fifty years, has been recruited from a small part of India, and only from certain sections in that area. The average Englishman knows no Indian history. He has swallowed a mass of ill-digested ideas about a "tiny minority of martial races" and the corollary that most Indians are "non-martial." Such loose talk has been common during the last few weeks. We have to explain to the world why we have called in Chinese and Americans to cover our deficiencies. The Conservative press is now taking the line that—as the Hindu politicians will not co-operate—the defence of India is "left to the British Army and the martial races." Official spokesmen play upon our general ignorance. I recently took the chair at an army lecture when the speaker solemnly informed us that the Burmese, being Buddhists, would never fight and could not be trained as soldiers. (This was just before it had transpired that some thousands were fighting on the Japanese side.) Afterwards I reminded the speaker that the Burmese invaded Bengal about the same time as we did, that we had fought two Burmese wars, and that our annexation of Upper Bengal was followed by a long period of guerilla fighting. I subsequently heard that he thought I was a very seditious person.

The truth is that out of India's 360 millions all but about eighty millions are of a type which will produce useful soldiers. The eighty millions mostly live in very enervating climates, like parts of the Ganges valley, and their diet seems to lack certain elements in the make-up of the ordinary fairly pugnacious human being. The remaining 280 millions are of peasant stock on whom our grandfathers drew when they needed soldiers. To a great extent we conquered the so-called martial races of the North with sepoys from what are now considered unmartial people. The former never dominated India. You may still find signs in Calcutta of the "Mahratta ditch," not the "Pathan ditch" or the "Gurkha ditch" or the "Punjabi Mussulman ditch." The Deccan Mahrattas, hardly used in the modern army, were the terror of India up till nearly a century ago. The northern Moslems are almost exclusively descendants of converts from lower caste Hindus. They make good soldiers, like most Indians of peasant stock, but that is all.

The martial race theory is a rationalisation of a policy in which our interests, obsessions and prejudices played the chief part. The most important obsession has been our fear of Russia. It led to the idea that the only Indian frontier was the North-West, a mistake comparable with the one we made in Malaya. It is nonsense to pretend that our concentration on this frontier was due to fear of the Pathans and Afghans. The Punjab chieftain, Ranjit Singh, had no difficulty in holding his frontier with men drawn from some two million Sikh peasants. Gradually we have moved our army northwards. No one dared to suggest that the sea-coast or the North-East frontier would ever be threatened.

It was convenient to collect our army from near the great cantonments of the Punjab, and natural to select men used to mountain and desert climates. Other considerations hastened the change. Towards the end of the nineteenth century the Home Rule agitation began to worry the Indian Government. It was reassuring to have regiments drawn from outside India, like the Nepalese Gurkhas, or from the unpolitical fringe, like the Pathans. Long before any question had arisen of dividing civil appointments on a religious basis, the army had adopted that unhappy principle. Many regiments, including one with which I served for some years, divided each company or squadron equally between Hindus and Moslems. Even small detachments would be half Pathan and half Sikh, or half Punjabi Mussulman and half Dogra. It was one of the advantages of the Punjab as a recruiting ground that the Province is very evenly divided between the two religions.

Our policy fitted in with our prejudices. A army officers in peacetime like their soldiers to be handsome and tall. The stocky Mahratta and flat-nosed Dravidian were unattractive. Ha unconsciously we accepted the Indian cast system, and the fine tough regiments our grand fathers recruited from the Mahars were quietl disbanded. Everyone interested in Indian politic knows Dr. Ambedkar, who represents th "depressed classes." He was one of the fe representatives at the Round Table Conferenc who would have caught the eye of recruiting sergeants looking for men who would be usefu in a commando. Dr. Ambedkar's father an grandfather were officers in the Indian army When his turn came to follow in their footsteps the army was closed to his caste. Politics gained a stubborn fighter, the army lost thousands o men who were free from any caste inhibitions an inured to a hard life.

From 1900 onwards huge tracts of India, which used to be dotted with small cantonments occupied by troops drawn from the surrounding country were left without a soldier. Naturally the villagers whom nobody recruited and who were not allowed to carry arms, have lost all touch with the army and totally forgotten their old fighting traditions. Inevitably they have drifted into that state of mind which was so apparent in Malaya. Knowing their complete inability to defend themselves they have lost all idea of resisting an invader. Wa is the job of the *sirkar* which collects their land revenue and somewhere or other controls a mighty force.

I was in India when Kut fell, and can remember the remarkable effect which that minor disaster had upon the country. The all-powerful *sirkar* had surrendered to the Turks. It was a tremendous blow to the old system, which was built up largely on bluff and on the idea of the white man's ultimate invincibility. Singapore and the Chinese troops in Burma must have killed our prestige for ever. There is no need to waste any tears over the passing of a system which was inherently bad. We do, however, owe India something for all the mistakes we have made, and above all for this lamentable policy of demilitarising the greater part of her population. A long-term policy would be easy enough to envisage. It is far harder to suggest any action to meet the present crisis.

Most of the old professional Indian army is intact, and has doubtless been extended from the lamentable figures given in earlier statements. If it could meet the Japanese in desert or mountainous country it would render a good account of itself. It is not likely to be so successful in the damp heat of southern India or Ceylon, and especially in the water-logged Sonderbund which may well be the next point of attack. It is too late to change the army or its system. The real problem is whether anything can be done to enlist the support of some small percentage of the 250 millions whom we have demilitarised. If some organisation could be got going, its chief duties would be to prevent Japanese infiltration, check the activities of Indian groups which may go the way of the Burmese *Thakin*, destroy crops and communications in front of the invader. And—if any arms are available—carry on guerilla fighting in their rear. Such activities could only be organised by Indians who are known and trusted in their districts. For the most part such men would not be found amongst Government officials. The only Englishmen who might come into the picture would be the handful of our countrymen who have achieved a reputation for being consistently pro-Indian and disinterested, and could therefore deal with the unofficial leaders. There are possibilities in such a scheme, but I doubt if any leading English politicians—except perhaps Sir Stafford Cripps—have minds sufficiently free from old prejudices even to consider them.

A LONDON DIARY

SIR Stafford Cripps has the most musical of voices; it was a pleasure to listen to his post-script. In substance he preached a sermon, a good sermon full of hope with some home truths thrown in. Like Ernest Bevin and Oliver Lyttelton before him, he talked about economic security and a better social order after the war. So far, in general terms, this Cabinet has decided to commit itself; if only because morale demands it, reconstruction, which must follow, as Sir Stafford reminded us, from changes occurring during the war, has become an unavoidable topic. The significance of such remarks from Sir Stafford lies in his reputation as an uncompromising Socialist. If Sir Stafford stakes his reputation, as an honest Socialist and as the second personality in the Government, on such an announcement, then, people say, there must be something in it. It cannot be just another piece of "pie-in-the-sky," "homes for heroes" stuff. So "we" listen with renewed attention, hoping that the vague will this time turn into the concrete. But "we" are very sceptical and disillusioned, and we note that Sir Stafford's attack on vested interests is still of a very general character. We shall wait a bit for some concrete proof of Sir Stafford's ability to carry out some item of structural change during the war. Our rulers have not yet surrendered one strategic point in the fortress of tradition. A broadcast that did not aspire or promise, but actually announced a single victory for "the people" whose war Sir Stafford again assures us it is, would transform the whole national outlook. Without such a change the people will soon be saying that Sir Stafford is being used by the Conservatives just as the Labour leaders were in 1931. That would be a disaster.

* * *

The people who went to the polls at Wallasey and Rugby and elected Independent candidates have drawn plenty of attention. It seems to me that a great deal more attention will now have to be paid to the very large number of people who wanted to go to the polls and found to their simple astonishment that they were ineligible as voters. I know that at least one of the election Committee Rooms at Rugby—and I daresay both—received on some days as many as a hundred men and women, first eager, then incredulous, then angry, who came to declare their support of the particular candidate and had to be told that in the present state of the register their support or their opposition were matters of indifference. In the nature of things, a majority of these people were either young men and women who had recently become formally enfranchised, or soldiers temporarily stationed in the constituency. And it stands to reason that people who take the trouble to go to the Committee Rooms and argue about whether they may vote or not are likely to be keen, politically active citizens—just the type, in fact, whose views the by-election surprises are supposed to be expressing.

* * *

On at least two recent occasions there have been circulated stories—more or less ostensibly confidential—to the effect that the Government was considering seriously what steps could be taken to alter our electoral registration methods so as to make it possible for a General Election to be held on terms not patently fraudulent or farcical. Because the circulation of these stories on each occasion happened to coincide with difficult moments for Mr. Churchill, it was understandable that some people should have dismissed them as a bluff intended to "scare up" extra support from Transport House and the Conservative Central Office, as an alternative to an election which could hardly be otherwise than shattering at least to the nerves of the old Party machine-minders. However that may be, it seems to me that facts have now forced upon us the need for a new electoral method. So long as the political truce worked, the parlous state of the Register did not matter very much. Now, for good or ill, the political truce has stopped working, and the state of the Register does matter. I believe Mr. Francis Williams, in his useful and at times brilliantly written book *Ten Angels Swearing* (Routledge, 5s.), was among the first political observers to foresee the situation that is now developing. Although I see great difficulties in the way of the method he proposes, I do advise anyone who realises the existence of this problem to read his suggestions for re-vivifying Parliament under wartime conditions. I think that he is wrong in suggesting that the National Register should be employed to make possible elections "through somewhat the same machinery as operates at present for the University seats, and to have voting by post." I think the thing to aim at is rather a system under which people can vote in the constituency where they happen to live or be stationed at the time of the election, and like "Observer," whose letter in this issue is worth careful reading, I cannot see why ration cards, and soldiers' papers, cannot solve this problem.

* * *

The old town of Lübeck which our bombs have battered flat was a place that breathed dignity and a restrained Protestant grace in all its quiet streets and ancient buildings. The tradition of the Hanseatic League lived on in it. These merchants sought wealth, but they cared even more for freedom and for the beauty of cunningly ordered bricks and carved stones. The friend who so describes it, saw it many years ago, as the guest of the German Social-Democratic party, then sitting in conference in Hamburg, which staged a performance of *Fidelio* and a visit to the churches and guildhall of Lübeck by way of entertaining their foreign comrades. And now, by the act of our bombers, this can never happen again. This old city was not Nazi property. It belonged to all civilised men, to you and me and to those Germans—they are not Nazis—who still have a disinterested love of beauty. It is our joint heritage we are destroying when we bomb such places. I am inconsolable over the Temple Church, but it does not comfort me to reflect that Münster Cathedral is also in ruins.

* * *

The worst evil of war is the state of mind in which we lose our sense of the enduring values of life. This issue has been raised in an even graver form by a letter which an anonymous officer on active service contributed to Tuesday's *Times*. He states that a deliberate effort is now made to arouse in men under training not merely hatred of the enemy but blood-lust. It is arranged that they shall be spattered with blood while doing bayonet practice, and they are then taken to watch killing in a slaughter-house. These antics of some Fat Boy in a Brass Hat will arouse only disgust in healthy adults, but a minority may be infected. A man suffering from blood-lust may show fury in attack. But he is unbalanced, perverted, neurotic. Will he be steady in defence and will he observe discipline? A minority on both sides in the last war acquired this disease of blood-lust—among us the Black and Tans, among the Germans the Free Corps, early Nazis, who carried out a long series of political murders. This encouragement of the ugliest tendency latent in the human animal will make war even more beastly than it need be. What is worse, it will smirch the peace with horror. When once blood-lust is kindled, it does not automatically die down at the "cease-fire."

* * *

The attack that is being worked up on the fuel rationing scheme is a reactionary affair. It is not an honest solution of the difficulties of rationing to suggest that only coal should be rationed; people with electric and gas heating and the money to pay for it unrestricted will do well enough, while the poor who have more than their share of coal fires will suffer. More astonishing still is the argument against coal rationing, advanced, I think, by some coal distributors who say that there will not be enough coal to provide the ration. Are we supposed to draw the inference that since there will not be enough to go round, the few with the greatest pull should get it?

I want heartily to congratulate the B.B.C. on the opening of its series of Indian discussions. This was the real stuff: controversial and useful because not propagandist. Sir Frederick Whyte is a sensible chairman and Carl Heath, the other Englishman on the panel, speaks with the persuasive power of a Quaker who has for long years worked for conciliation. Dr. Ghose, an Indian liberal, held with Carl Heath that the Cripps's mission might yet be found to have opened a door and not to have been, as the Indian Congress representative, Mr. Tamenkar, thought, a failure leaving our relations more bitter and hopeless. Sirdar Ikbal Ali Shah is a Moslem who has written on Islam in this journal from time to time; he championed the Pakistan conception; his explanation of the action of the Moslem League in rejecting the Cripps proposals unconsciously confirmed the view I had formed from reading the White Paper that the Moslem League would have accepted the proposals had they thought it politic to accept what Congress rejected. But the great value of this discussion was its honesty: Mr. Tamenkar pulled no punches and the discussion was real discussion.

* * *

This is belated, but I am assured that it is true. It relates to a Belgian charwoman who escaped with other refugees to this country in 1940. Her *carte d'identité* classified her occupation as *journalière* and the poor thing, who knew practically no English, had been coached to repeat *journalière*—daily worker. The result was lamentable. To the harassed port control a foreign journalist claiming affiliations with the *Daily Worker* was an obvious gift and she was unceremoniously corralled as a fifth columnist suspect. She was in prison five months before the matter was cleared up.

CRITIC

THE NEW BOY

"Labour members . . . preserved an eloquent silence when Mr. Brown was introduced. . . . After he had taken the oath he pushed out his hand in a Dr.-Livingstone-I-presume manner to Sir Stafford Cripps. Sir Stafford shook hands with the new Member."—*Evening Standard*, May 5.

When Brown came to St. Stephen's the big boys
did not cheer,
The prefects were exceptionally cool
Floreat Westminster!
And house masters in attendance made it absolutely clear
He was not the type they wanted at the school
Floreat Westminster!

The new boy seemed undaunted by the silent
reprimand,
Though it was plain his classmates wouldn't
speak,
But on entering the School Hall shook the head
boy by the hand,
Which was definitely most colossal cheek.

In the studies and the common-room the comment was widespread
That Brown appeared too confident by half,
And while it was admitted he was sound about
the Head,
He had made some rotten cracks about the staff.

St. Stephen's Board of Governors deplore all
kinds of noise,
The upper forms are getting old for rags,
And they fear that independent and disruptive
sorts of boys
Might easily demoralise the fags.

Team-spirit is the spirit that pervades St. Stephen's
School,
Outsiders, getting in, must be kept down;
Floreat Westminster!
And though united cheering for some terms has
been the rule,
St. Stephen's would not raise a cheer for Brown.
Floreat Westminster!

SAGITTARIUS

PLEBISCITE IN CANADA

THE Canadian plebiscite of April 27, in which the voters were asked to release the Government from its pledge not to introduce conscription for overseas service, resulted in a 65-35 division in favour of the "ayes." On the surface, at least, it would appear that the Government had achieved a very considerable triumph. "The vote means," said Prime Minister Mackenzie King, "that the people generally recognise that the war has taken a course which was altogether unforeseen. . . . There can be no doubt about the significance of the vote."

Despite such unavoidable political blandishments, no one is better aware than Mr. King that there exists in fact a whole host of doubts about the true significance of the vote. Those unfamiliar with the complexities of Canadian politics might interpret the vote as a prelude to the introduction of conscription. The matter, however, is not quite so simple.

The eternal problem which confronts every Canadian administration is that of reconciling or at least maintaining a semblance of harmony between the English majority and the French minority. If it fails in this task, no Government can hope to survive. This consideration had much to do with Mr. King's decision to stage the plebiscite. On the one hand, he could not afford indefinitely to ignore the growing demand from English Canada for the introduction of unlimited national service; in recent months even the staunchly Liberal Vancouver *Sun* and Winnipeg *Free Press* had joined the chorus of demanders. On the other hand, he could no more afford to ignore his oft-repeated pledge to French Canada nor the violent recrudescence of nationalist sentiment in the Province of Quebec. The plebiscite was an attempt at a compromise solution.

Did the plebiscite achieve its purpose? The French Canadians constitute 31 per cent. of the Dominion's population. An analysis of the election returns would indicate that approximately 90 per cent. of English Canada voted "Aye" and 90 per cent. of French Canada voted "No." English Canada and French Canada stood ranged solidly against each other; what was hitherto implicit has now become a matter of statistics.

Encouraged by the knowledge of its own solidarity, it is doubtful whether French Canada would submit passively to the will of the English majority—and it is equally doubtful whether Mr. King, whose chief electoral strength has always been in Quebec, would venture to impose this will. But "agin-ness" is as much an attribute of the majority as it is of the minority; having voted overwhelmingly to release the Government from its "no conscription" pledge, English Canada will expect Mr. King to do something about it—nor will it help matters if it feels that he is kowtowing to the French Canadian minority. In short, the result of the plebiscite would tend to bear out the initial fears that the plebiscite, even if successful, would complicate matters rather than simplify them.

Mr. King's position is not an enviable one. His critics are perhaps right in suggesting that he might have done more to lead the country instead of submitting passively to the admitted difficulties of the situation. John MacCormac of the New York *Times*, in his book *Canada, America's Problem*, speaks of him scathingly as "Mr. King, that cautious man." Yet it is precisely those qualities which agitate his critics most—his "fence-sitting," his "ordinariness," his "lack-lustre politics," his "talent for always saying nothing at the appropriate moment"—that have made Mr. King such an unprecedented success in Canadian politics. (When he completes his present term, Mr. King will have been Prime Minister for 20 out of 24 years.) Indeed, his supporters are probably correct in asserting that, had it not been for Mr. King's genius for compromise, Canada would be a less united nation to-day.

The critics fail to appreciate French Canadian nationalism. It is questionable whether even the most aggressive and intelligent leadership could have done much to change the attitude of French Canada to conscription. It is necessary to remember that even the great Sir Wilfred Laurier, whose influence over the *québecqoix* had been strong enough to obtain their electoral support against the pastoral directives of their clergy, went down to defeat in 1911 at the hands of his own compatriots when his Government had proposed the creating of an auxiliary to the British Navy.

The failure of English Canada to comprehend the psychology of French Canada—and vice versa—puts one in mind of G. K. Chesterton's little ditty:

> O, how I love humanity,
> With a love so pure and pringlish.
> But how I hate the horrid French,
> Who never will be English.

Logically or illogically, the French Canadians still remember that they are a conquered people. They consider it wrong that the wealth of the province should be monopolised by the English minority, whilst they, the descendants of the original *habitants*, should be confined to the most menial occupations. To conscription they are unalterably opposed—partly because of their minority psychology, mostly because they remember the bitter anti-conscription conflict of 1917.

What will be done it is still difficult to say. Off and on there has been talk of applying conscription to English Canada and leaving French Canada out of it. But it is highly doubtful whether this would be feasible. In the last war the enforcement of conscription encountered such difficulties in Quebec that the authorities decided that it would be the better part of prudence to "go easy": the result was a *de facto* suspension of the conscription act in the province for the balance of the war. Mr. King may conceivably attempt to duplicate this arrangement by introducing conscription, but enforcing its application in Quebec only so rigidly as the situation permits.

It may be that Quebec's manifest isolation from the rest of Canada will have a sobering effect upon the French Canadians. The more optimistic point out that after having voted themselves into a similar position of isolation in the war election of 1917, and after their provincial legislature had debated the question of secession from the Dominion, the *Canadiens* wound up by resigning themselves to the inevitable and almost overnight the agitation in the province subsided. Mass movements, however, have a rhythm and logic of their own: like the waves of the ocean, they grow, achieve a climax—successful or unsuccessful—and then, having exhausted their dynamic potential, they collapse. French Canadian nationalism achieved one such apogee in the 1917 war election and in the riots that preceded it. That the new wave has yet spent its energy, is very far from certain.

DAVID MARTIN

THIS ENGLAND

A 5 - prize for the first entry in this column goes to Elizabeth Taylor.

Paste entries on postcard or slip of paper and give details of origin. Address to THIS ENGLAND, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

Can there be a more ludicrous advertisement for "Democracy" than these nuisance by-elections which have resulted in two Government defeats in one day?—Letter in *Sunday Times*.

1812 Overture—Brilliant musical masterpiece, but the symphony of symphonies that will resound across the world is the music of the armaments from iron and steel scrap sent to Cox and Danks, Ltd.—Advt. in *Manchester Guardian*.

Because they say the encroachment of the sea is "an act of God," Norfolk County Council have refused to contribute towards the cost of stopping coast erosion at Caister.—*Evening News*.

"We telegraph flowers to ANY part of the world."—Advertisement read in Colwyn Bay.

"KNOWLEDGE TO THEIR EYES"

THE House of Lords, the Protestant Churches and the Minister of Education have united to speak in favour of religion in schools, though history suggests that Archbishop Lang is optimistic when he equates good conduct so closely with the results of religious instruction. The two first want two forty-minute periods a week of the school time-table given to the inculcation of Morality and Goodness.

It is arguable that such teaching will have just about as much result as if the same forty-minute periods were given to teaching a child "Happiness" or "Abstract Beauty." Friar Roger Bacon held that a pursuit of the knowledge of what leads to satisfactory human behaviour is the most important, practical, and urgent of all sciences. Agreeing emphatically with him, I still do not believe that direct exhortation is the way to apply such knowledge as we have; I believe that knowledge to have increased since Friar Bacon's day.

What about the often suspect view that a school is a place to which children go in order to learn, to acquire information and various sorts of skill? Modern child-psychologists, concerned as they are chiefly with behaviour, agree that this intellectual "getting on" means a great deal to children and that they crave for intellectual food just as they crave for bodily food. No one who has to do with evacuated or any other children can have failed to notice that there has been a silent and important revolution. As schools have improved, the attitude of the children has changed. They no longer creep to school like snails or at all unwillingly. By and large, the nation's children enjoy school and discuss their lessons, and the better they are taught the more they enjoy it.

Good schools do teach morality, goodness, social conduct—whatever you like to call it; but by a kind of contagious experience, not by the imparting of maxims. *Per contra* anyone who has been in contact with the problems of evacuation and reception, and with current family life here, knows very well where to look for the causes of the increase in Juvenile Delinquency. Few of us who have had that experience are likely to seek a remedy along the lines of exhortation.

What, then, is the present state and immediate outlook of our schools? Practically every school in the country has been more or less affected, first, by evacuation, and now by the drift-back. No up-to-date national figures are available at the moment, but the figures for London are that, out of a pre-war school population of 420,000, there are now about 167,000 school-children in London, and a further 50,000 to 80,000 who have been, as it were, "lost" through unofficial evacuation, migration, and the evasion of school attendance by children who have almost reached the school-leaving age. (This business of leaving school six or eight months before the legal time is widespread.) Nominally all children are now getting full-time education either in a reception or evacuation area, but the quality of this education has often dropped: because parts of many school buildings are still being used for other purposes—(civil defence, and, apparently, for military purposes.) Laboratories and workshops have suffered most because of the "wastage" of staff. Rest and Feeding Centres are no longer staffed by teachers, but owing to the "uneconomic" scattering of children in Reception Areas, there is a shortage of teachers in most big towns, and, consequently, a deplorable increase in the size of classes. The L.C.C. declares that it has no classes in London of over 40, but in some cities to which children have drifted back, a teacher may be struggling with as many as 60 children.

As to the results on the children of war conditions, there seem to be three points of view. Doctors say that evacuation has improved the

children's health. Teachers say that it has sometimes improved their learning capacity and that the drop in attainment owing to loss of school time, though definite, is not as serious as might have been feared. For example, in some coastal towns children "ran wild" for eighteen months; after six or eight weeks' regular schooling, teachers estimate that these children are only six months retarded. Psychologists who deal with "difficult and delinquent children" have reached a surprising conclusion. In the case of children of school age the emotional upset of being evacuated seems to have been greater than the upset of being blitzed. There are modifications to this statement. The younger the child, the worse blitzing is for it, while, of course, no psychologist suggests that it is good for a child for it to be physically injured. We know that the courts think that there has been an alarming increase in juvenile delinquency.

What about the future? Education officials are disinclined to prophesy. The investigator frames a question: "In the light of the enormous amount of new experience gained, what changes would you like to see in our schools after the war?" One official cited with approval an excellent but minor reform which would result in free places in secondary schools being granted on a fairer examination standard. When the investigator dangled bright thoughts about a boarding-school period for every child; the much more careful grading of children by means of intelligence or other tests of learning capacity; the provision of greatly improved facilities for children with special gifts—no reactions whatever were produced.

From three others, results were much more encouraging. One turned out to be an enthusiast for intelligence tests, about which his information was wide and up to date. He realised the enormous gain to the cleverest of the nation's children if they could be saved the gruelling strain of the 11+ and the School Certificate examinations. He understood fully the difficulties of the substitution of intelligence tests: i.e., that there is a danger of children being coached for the tests by ambitious teachers and that the tests as they are at present do not do full justice to the child with a patchy but perhaps highly creative mind. Another had given a good deal of thought to the value to children of having a brief boarding-school experience, and was very much interested in how after the war the present facilities for such an experience might be extended and utilised. Another was an enthusiast for Nursery Schools and was also hoping great things of certain reforms in the training of teachers.

In general the inquiring layman may perhaps come to such conclusions as these:—

Credit. That there is an admirable lack of any tendency to Nazification. That the outlook of the higher officials and of such beings as H.M. Inspectors, though occasionally timid, is sane and progressive. That officials are aware of shortcomings and (pushed and encouraged) have the knowledge and experience to make reforms work.

Debit. That they are still insufficiently aware of how intelligent some children are, and they don't give enough attention to the intellectual content of teaching. (Possibly a sixth of the nation's children could, and would, profit by genuinely cultural and intelligent lessons.) That there is not enough realisation that schools have not kept up with the world and that children live in a world of highly developed technics based on science. Ostensibly education gives information about environment. On this side of every child's environment our education is almost silent. Again they live in a world of complex social organisation in which we propose that they should play their part. Explanation of this, too, is insufficient. It seems, then, that there is a great deal of good in the school of to-day and that it will be a pity to introduce too much of what will inevitably be felt as "pi-jaw," and that when it comes to the sort of reforms that we might like to see introduced we may hope to find informed support within the machine.

AMABEL WILLIAMS-ELLIS

GEOFFREY GARRATT

OUR national effort had no place for him, so Geoffrey, over fifty, joined the Pioneers. He was interviewed from time to time and there was talk of using him in Military Intelligence; when a special India branch was started, some thought it might employ men with knowledge. But he stayed a Pioneer. Recently, mess chaff informed him: "They've stuck you with the M.B.E.," and friends commiserated with him. After his death we learnt it was for "conspicuous gallantry in carrying out hazardous work in a very brave manner." All we had known was that he was training with characteristic kindness aliens who were trying to serve us.

A publicist, he never publicised himself. His moral and physical pluck were a living denial of a contemporary humorist's notion that the Left is cowardly and war's perils borne chiefly by men soundly based in the Munich creed. Wherever men suffered wrong, this man went; Calcutta *bustis*, our depressed areas, Czechoslovakia, Finland, all had his practical compassion. For Ethiopia, in adventurous journeys and in dingy office, he freely spent his means. Spain at one time was almost a week-end trip for many. Geoffrey gave up years to Spain.

In a sense his life was frustration. After a brilliant career at Rugby and Oxford, he entered the I.C.S. War took him, a cavalry officer, to Mesopotamia. Returning to India, he resigned, refusing a soft job which would have led to the usual rewards. He joined the Labour Party (who allotted him hopeless constituencies) and turned journalist. He wrote books, which failed of the reputation they deserved; their author was interested in too many things and had a habit of seeing too far. For example, *The Mugwumps and the Labour Party* devastatingly analysed Labour leadership. Geoffrey was temporarily struck off the list of candidates. Later, when Socialist peers were wanted, someone tactlessly suggested his name. Mr. Ramsay MacDonald kept a pained silence.

It was natural that officialdom refused to use him. The refusal gives the measure of the fear he aroused.

> If you have writ your annals true, 'tis there,
> That, like an eagle in a dovecot, I
> Fluttered your Volscians in Corioli.

He was disquieting, this man whom no racket attracted, no disapproval awed. He was not in the least what officials like critics to be. A good horseman, capable with hands as well as head, he seemed a typical Englishman of the ruling class. But he was an intellectual, a Socialist who believed in Socialism, and he had the gift of irony, which makes conventional minds very unhappy. Once only his unique qualities were used, as Labour Secretary in the Round Table Conference. Indians never forgot his personality, and he nearly achieved the miracle of Hindu-Muslim agreement. The Gaekwar of Baroda, India's most progressive State, wanted him as Naib-Dewan, and Geoffrey, who knew he had a flair for administration, accepted. *Dis aliter visum*. "Do you know what happened?" another Prince asked me. "My whole Order are wondering, though we knew Simla would veto Garratt."

I knew him first through *An Indian Commentary*, a book that took long to date. India knew him earlier. "One Englishman I *must* meet," said the Prime Minister of an Indian State. "Other officials resigned—plenty of them!—because the Reforms went too far. Only one because they did not go far enough!" "Three Englishmen," said Sir Kailash Haksar, when Director-General of the Princes' Secretariat, "are known all over India as absolutely honest. The first is Geoffrey Garratt." When Sapru and Jayakar planned a new daily, to be sympathetic without being sloppy and incompetent, Garratt was the editor they picked. This also fell through.

He uttered no fine sentiments, he merely passed through a succession of fine deeds. His talk and letters were a delight, with the unexpected trenchant phrase, the wit, the occasional (very occasional) outburst of wholly satisfying ribaldry. You could say nothing he misunderstood or took offence at. He never bored: he was vivid: each meeting left its clear-cut image. His last evening, eager and hopeful, he rang up his wife. People had suggested that his unique accumulation of goodwill in India should be used, a member of the War Cabinet had sent for him. Next day he was blown to bits.

EDWARD THOMPSON

THE ROYAL ACADEMY?

"WITH a dignified sense of its obligations the Royal Academy has this year devoted the long gallery at Burlington House to a retrospective exhibition of the two senior artists recently deceased, Sickert and Wilson Steer. This innovation is abundantly justified, for it was these men who initiated in the Eighties the revival of painting in this country. Steer, a more unequal as well as a less original artist than Sickert, is represented by fewer works, but these have been carefully selected to give the most favourable opinion of his achievement. Apart from its intrinsic value, this retrospect provides a standard of quality that must help the visitor to enjoy the rest of the exhibition with discrimination.

Let us begin with the portraits. The most popular is likely to be Sir William Nicholson's half-length of the Prime Minister. This is immensely alive, bursting with character, and at the same time very delicate in colour and texture. Vanessa Bell's painting of the Queen and her two daughters may provoke more discussion, for the artist has emphasised family affection rather than majesty. The composition and the colour arrangements, moreover, have some analogy with the practice of Matisse, though the pose of the figures echoes, I fancy, a Correggio at Parma. An ambitious and impressive picture. William Coldstream is at his best in the portrait of Sir Stafford Cripps—the austerity of the subject is evidently congenial. Rodrigo Moynihan shows three good portraits, of Mrs. Alan Cameron, of Mr. Edward Sackville West and of Mr. G. Hyslop. Lawrence Gowing's *Mrs. Tomlin* is carried further—and with gratifying results—than many works by this gifted painter. Other good portraits are Wyndham Lewis's *D. B. Wyndham Lewis*, A. Gwynne-Jones's *The Straw Hat*, and Joan Souter-Robinson's *The Twins*.

The most striking feature of the exhibition is the number of ambitious figure compositions. Matthew Smith shows two Bacchanales, with torrid nudes elaborately woven into a background of livid verdure. Duncan Grant has sent three large decorative panels designed for a church. Though painted in oil on canvas, these have the chalky colours found in frescoes and are therefore specially suited to take their place on a stone wall. The youthful Christ has a radiance happily suggestive of the Quattrocento. Ivon Hitchens's decorations for the waiting-room of a hospital are also most felicitous: woods and an estuary with sailing ships are shown as it were through a grille of huge flowers in the immediate foreground. Winifred Nicholson is another artist with a conspicuous gift for imaginative decoration, happily shown in a large oval picture called *The Island*. Paul Nash sets in a landscape of lunar downs trees like fossil dinosaurs and nudes blanched like statues. *Corfe Castle* is the best of the three oils by Frances Hodgkins. The colour is Mediterranean, but the poetical quality of the Dorset scene has clearly fired the painter's imagination. John Piper is interesting equally in his portraits of country houses (*Drayton* and *Friar Park*) and in his feverishly romantic fantasy *The Mysteries of Udolpho*. Graham Sutherland's works also fall into two categories—pictures of blast furnaces and landscapes, both with figures that reveal uncommon gradition.

The rigid tubular forms favoured by William Roberts are specially suited to war-subjects, and his *Commando* makes a terrifying impression

with angular boats supporting bunches of blackened faces. Edward Wadsworth's *Submarine Base* is another good example of stylisation applied to the mechanised forms of modern war.

Among the more realistic pictures, I specially admired Victor Pasmore's *Reclining Nudes* and *Prunus*. Professor MacColl's *Still Life* is thoughtful and admirably painted. I also enjoyed Leonard Applebee's *Apples*; Alison Debenham's *Dinner at Frascati's*; Richard Wyndham's *Up Park*; Thérèse Lessore's *Milsom Street*; Rogers's *The Evacuees and Mrs. A.*; Adrian Daintrey's *The Rake*; Leslie Hunter's *Haggis*; Morland Lewis's three pictures of Hull; Frances Macdonald's *Park Crescent*; Cedric Morris's *Taos*; Eve Kirk's *The Pump-Room*; Lady Patricia Ramsay's *Peonies*; Brynhild Parker's *Saloon*; R. Medley's *First Aid*; N. Benois's *Dover*; Graham Bell's *The Anteroom*; J. Aldridge's *Medmenham*; H. Carr's *Larne Harbour*; Keith Baynes's *The Foals*; Douglas Davidson's *Pugilist*; Kenneth Rowntree's *Café*; Lowes Luard's *Ploughing*; L. Faithfull's *Mesopotamia*; Denis Mathew's *Decontamination*; Sylvia Gosse's *Les Andelys*; Evelyn Dunlop's *Wrens at Dover*; and three most delicate paintings by Mary Potter.

Surrealist painting is hardly represented, since its purposes are not of the aesthetic order that the Academy was founded to forward. But a number of works have the disquieting elements that the surrealists seek to exploit. John Armstrong, for instance, has painted a picture called *Hope*, showing the War Office in ruins "by the caper overrooted, by the gourd Overscored." Thomas Lowinsky sends a Still Life, executed with Pre-Raphaelite particularity, but of objects so heterogeneous as to disturb the spectator; John Craxton's swarthy landscape with figures seems loud with lamentation; and Stanley Spencer's *Walls of Troy*, which, like his earlier work shows the influence of the Italian Primitives, possesses "literary" interest. John Banting's *Suñer* is the most sinister of exhibits. Abstract painting is well represented. It provides the young artist with a stern training in design, and is moreover a *genre* that appeals to the Puritanical virtues of many English temperaments. Ben Nicolson and Tunnard both combine exquisitely refined taste with great delicacy of execution.

The water-colours are excellent, and some of the best are by painters already mentioned. Other artists to look out for in the water-colour rooms are du Plessis, David Jones, Katharine Church, Edward Bawden, Geoffrey Tibble, Eric Ravillious, Vera Cunningham, L. Rosoman, Kennington, Schwabe, B. Mackenzie-Smith, Barnett Freedman, Antony Gross, Coxon, Burra, Kenneth Wood, Edna Clarke-Hall, Susan Palmer, Pic, Mary Kessell, F. Engelbach, Lynton Lamb. There are also a number of designs for the stage, including work by Albert Rutherston, Cecil Beaton, Rex Whistler, Oliver Messel, Roger Furse, Derek Hill, Berners and Antony Bridge.

The sculpture is the weakest section of the exhibition. A model for a Memorial on a colossal scale by Henry Moore is much the most impressive object. Epstein shows some vivid portrait busts; Boris Anrep's mosaics are as beautiful as anything in the building. The architectural exhibits are almost all designs for replanning our cities after the war and consequently are of such importance as to require a separate article.

Such is an adumbration of what one would be able to write about this year's Royal Academy if the exhibition at Burlington House gave any reasonable representation of contemporary British art. I have not included the names of all the artists whom I admire, and I have included some whose work I do not personally enjoy. But I have mentioned over eighty names, and I believe I have made a fairly catholic choice. Need I add that not one of these artists is represented in the Academy show? And, moreover, I should be greatly astonished if any of them had sent in—though it is only at the Academy that no commission is taken on sales. Their abstention seems to me entirely commendable, for I believe that art in this country will benefit when the Academy has lost the last relics of its prestige in the dimmest art-schools and remotest rectories, as well as among critics and collectors. Lucien Pissarro, Charles Ginner, Augustus John, Ethel Walker, Connard — a very few such honoured names can be cited, I admit, as props of this decrepit institution. The President himself, Sir Edwin Lutyens, has conspicuous gifts. But it is characteristic of the Royal Academy that in this summer of 1942 the architectural exhibits include not a single example of the town-planning that will be so urgent a necessity. I conclude that the Royal Academy itself, like a Victorian slum, has sunk to a state in which mere reconditioning is no longer practicable. RAYMOND MORTIMER

SPRING IN THE TOWN

The rounded 'buses loom through softest blue,
The pavement smells of dust and of narcissus too.
The awnings spread like flowers in the sun,
Even the oldest taxis glitter as they run.

Over the secret, sooty garden walls,
Like a new Paradise the cherry blossom falls.
Through fresh-born lilac prowl the adventuring cats,
And even the ugliest women tilt their summery hats.

FRANCES CORNFORD

THE MOVIES

"The Day Will Dawn," at the Leicester Square.
"Good Morning, Doctor!" at the Regal.
"One Foot in Heaven," at Warners.

Films of Nazi brutality at home have been succeeded by glimpses into "occupied territory." *The Day Will Dawn* is the third film of the kind within a few weeks. A foreign correspondent in Norway, U-boat sinkings in the North Sea, invasion, the emergence of local heroes and quislings, a Commando raid daringly planned and carried out: here are all the ingredients of a thriller, designed to bring the news bulletins to life. Does it thrill? Yes; Mr. Frank Owen has written a banging script, with a leaderette or two slipped in at the right moment. His journalists, holding forth in bars and being transferred from the sporting page to the European front, are unusually authentic, and there are some stirring incidents of resistance to Nazi rule. Miss Deborah Kerr, with a background of real Norwegians, acts charmingly and manages to borrow their accent, too; if anyone deserves to escape the firing-squad by a split second and the arrival of the Commandos, she does. And yet, admitting that *The Day Will Dawn* goes in the right direction, and that live melodramas are better than dead dramas, I wonder if the producer has not underrated his material. After all, his theme of patriotic resistance thrills more than last-minute rescues, and at moments here the two are allowed to clash. There were ironical cheers from a large and mixed audience when the Commandos, like the sheriff's posse, dashed in; and a little earlier in the film, the Nazi soldier's "A half-hour more!" to the prisoners waiting to be shot produced excited titters instead of tense silence. *The Day Will Dawn* would have been a better film and no less popular if its climax had been subtly timed. Some failure in realism must be set against good entertainment. True, we enjoy the adventures of the cool and dashing newspaperman (Hugh Williams) turned parachutist, but with a feeling that Ralph Richardson, sent off by the same editor to Finland, may have met situations less conventionally dramatic. However, I don't want to pick holes unnecessarily in a film that is exciting, helpful and unpretentious.

Good Morning, Doctor! gives us the guaranteed Hollywood reflexes to the situation of a woman doctor marrying a millionaire. She despises money, he develops jealousies and a nostalgia for work. Career or marriage? Money or your life? Poor little rich boy (Henry Fonda) has a grilling time settling down with his "matoor woman with a coldly clinical mind" (Barbara Stanwyck); and the manias of jealousy, though spun out, are painful and sometimes fnuny.

The happy ending to *One Foot in Heaven* is its least happy touch. Fredric March, Methodist minister, sits aloft in the church of his dreams playing a hymn on the bells, while people flock out of offices and shops below to look up with shining faces. The film isn't nearly so bad as its final tableau. Family life during thirty years in parsonages with leaky roofs and empty larders is on the humdrum side, but it gives opportunities for fun-poking of a sly kind. This is a *Life With Father* in terms of American Methodism—not exciting, perhaps, but full of an uneventful charm. WILLIAM WHITEBAIT

Correspondence

THE LESSONS OF RUGBY

SIR,—Mr. Brown's return at Rugby—an election I watched on the spot—is a considerable achievement and a clear warning to the main political organisations. He had no machine; of his mere handful of workers few were resident in the constituency; great numbers of his potential supporters were disfranchised; he had to win over an electorate with a big town vote (much of which was steeped in the old Rugby tradition) and a straggling countryside, comprising about 250 villages; there was no adequate canvass; Conservative, Liberal and Communist leaders advised the electors to vote for Sir Claude Holbrook, the official candidate, and the National Council of Labour denounced him as a "disruptionist" and not fit to represent Rugby.

Col. Holbrook had the advantage of a first-class election machine; he had a thorough canvass; on polling day it was claimed that over 600 workers were on the doorsteps. Capt. David Margesson, the ex-Member, and all the local big-wigs were on his side, and yet he polled less than half of the Conservative vote at the last General Election.

What, therefore, were the main factors which contributed to this significant result? First of them was undoubtedly the dislike of the electors for the party truce and the party caucus. At every meeting Mr. Brown appealed to the voters to reject the "rubber-stamp" and elect a free and independent member. When Col. Holbrook waved Mr. Churchill's letter of commendation, Mr. Brown retorted "I am Churchill's best friend; every vote for Holbrook is a vote for Churchill tied; every vote for Brown is a vote for Churchill free."

Throughout the contest the Labour electors for the great part, remained ostentatiously silent and almost sullen, but on polling day Mr. Brown must have roped in the vast majority of the available Labour vote. On reflection the resolution of the National Council of Labour must be regarded as a profound mistake. The Labour supporters resented it as dictatorship. And after all, the resolution was only of a negative character, and at its best, or worst, would only have put Col. Holbrook in by wholesale abstentions. Mr. Attlee's subsequent failure to turn the negative advice into positive action only aggravated the situation, with the result that Labour took the law into its own hands and voted for Mr. Brown. I add that steps taken now to discipline Labour in Rugby will be to pile mistake on mistake.

Mr. Brown had, of course, the advantage of fighting an obviously unpopular candidate, but that added to his argument that the political caucuses had no regard for the opinions and feelings of the electors and were using the war to foist old party hacks and "duds" upon the constituencies. This is bound to come unstuck in places like Rugby where there has been keen political fighting for years.

Mr. Brown's majority would have been considerably greater if the younger men and women and the newcomers to the town had been entitled to vote. With the growing factory development in Rugby there has been a great influx, and keen disappointment was expressed at the non-appearance of their names on the register. There was also bitter resentment when it was discovered that those who have reached 21 since the compilation of the list were not eligible. An additional grievance was that there is no adequate machinery for the men in the services to cast their votes.

This scandal of the stale register must really be dealt with at an early date if there is to be live and

intelligent interest in the constituencies. It is surely not beyond the wit of the experts to devise some means of keeping the register up to date. Either through the machinery of identity cards or ration books it ought to be possible to provide a representative electorate.

But the pressing problem for the parties is to revitalise the political machine. It is no doubt a good thing that here and there independent candidates should be able to show the old men that they cannot do just what they like in peopling the House of Commons with docile "yes-men," but having done that the problem is still unsolved for the inevitable tendency will be for the Independents to form new parties and new groups. The foundations of democracy rest upon the parties and it is their imperative and immediate duty to readjust their minds to a changing situation and to provide opportunities for men and women with fresh, vital outlooks to take their rightful place in the governance of their country. Until that is done there will be a succession of results like Grantham, Wallasey and Rugby. OBSERVER

THE ADVANCE IN INDIA

SIR,—In Burma the end must be near. India's turn has come. Her seaboard lies open to attacks whose time and place Japan can choose: her population flees inland, and a land always close to the starvation line is likely to experience famine reinforced by terror. It was the military position which made Gandhi's remark that our offer of independence later was "a postdated cheque," that otherwise seemed a rather ungenerous crack, fair comment. It has ceased to matter what we concede or refuse. As THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION said, the cheque may be returned marked "No Effects."

The almost incredible speed of the Japanese advance even accelerates. Our own thinking stays in a vanished world. As if still free to argue on yesterday's lines, we consider communal adjustments and our treaty obligations to the Princes, we keep on rejoicing that the Cripps mission had a fine press in the U.S.A., we note the split in Congress. The press will change, the split will not help us. We say the mission did immense good. This was true but is true no longer. Its abrupt conclusion in a flash of anger and recriminations has estranged even Moderates. The mission is already a century away. The historian may see it as the last chance to save the British connection. Nehru says it would have won a settlement had Sir Stafford been able to offer what Sapru and his co-signatories to the Washington Appeal asked, a National Cabinet Government. But Nehru, who wavered so strongly towards us, has lost. Gandhi has staged a comeback for his policy of Non-Violent Passive Resistance to invasion.

The arguments against a National Cabinet Government made an impression, which now wears off. Such a Government would be a dictatorship, but so are all wartime governments: irremovable, but all governments are desperately hard to budge, and this would be merely an interim arrangement. It would put India under a Congress majority. Nehru denies that Congress demanded a majority, if Cabinet Government were established. The one strong argument was that the government would be responsible to nothing except the communal and other groups who provided its personnel. I could wish that Congress would consent that for the interim period the Viceroy, this or another Viceroy, might be the centre of reference, to say that the personnel needed changing. The Viceroy's impartiality is respected, and we must suppose that he would not say this until the fact was notorious; and all governments sometimes require overhauling. I doubt if we could now get this concession, however. The Viceroy, of course, would be outside a genuine Cabinet Government; he is believed to desire one.

This country seems to have decided to wait on events, to bring us and Indian opinion together. Events may do this, but may work otherwise. What will happen if the present arrangements continue, is that the British public, which has supped full of shocks already, will have some more. Neither Non-Violence nor the Viceroy's Council is adequate for what is coming. The National Government is a necessity, and if there is any way of getting it, then even now the co-operation of British and representative Indians in India's defence may awaken the old kindness and we may yet achieve what so many of us have worked for, a reconciliation in India of East and West. EDWARD THOMPSON

BITTER-ENDERS

SIR,—Professor Pragier was ill-advised to write that "the German people seem to be quite united under Hitler's rule" just after Hitler's speech to the Reichstag. For the one thing clear from that speech is that there is something so seriously wrong with German unity as gravely to alarm the Führer. That impression is confirmed by the information reaching this country from well-informed Swedish and Swiss sources. If the German people were united there would be no need for Hitler to strengthen the armaments of the Gestapo and S.S. troops, to station the latter in factories, and to erect machine-gun nests in towns—in short, to make elaborate preparations for defending the Nazi regime in case of civil war.

Professor Pragier presumably thinks Himmler was only joking when he said, shortly before the war, that in case of war:

> We must have more concentration camps . . . We will have to deal not merely with the Army on land, the Navy at sea, and the Luftwaffe in the air; we shall have a fourth battlefield to look after: Inner Germany! At the beginning of the war, mass arrests on an unprecedented scale will be necessary . . . many political prisoners will have to be shot out of hand . . . the entire country must be occupied by a minimum of thirty Death's-head divisions . . . We must have no illusions about the fact that any war in which we neglected the home battlefront would lead to catastrophe.

There is, it is true, less sabotage in Germany than in the occupied countries. But that is no more a reflection on the German workers than on the 2,000,000 foreign workers in Germany. In view of the elaborate system of espionage, propaganda and terror, it is surprising that there is as much sabotage as actually occurs, and so many beheadings for "treason." In point of fact there is a good deal of fraternising and of international working-class solidarity between foreign and German slave-labour in Hitler's factories.

On that point, and on the baleful use made by Goebbels of the terror propaganda of the Vansittarts and their Quislings, I herewith quote the testimony of a young Polish officer, who escaped to this country after a year in German factories as a war-prisoner. In an interview in the *Daily Telegraph* of March 4th this Polish officer said:

> Many Germans regard the prisoners more as fellow-sufferers than as enemies, and they are surprisingly frank in their conversation . . . The propaganda put out by Goebbels, though it has failed to evoke the slightest enthusiasm for the war, has succeeded in instilling into the people a deep-rooted fear of what would happen were Germany defeated. Fear of defeat and its consequences has led to a feverish rate of work in German factories and on German farms.

A LABOUR CANDIDATE

POLISH UNDERGROUND PRESS

SIR,—I have read with great interest in your issue of April 25 an article about the underground Continental press, but note with regret that it has omitted to mention the existence and importance of the Polish underground press which has sprung into being on the morrow of Germany's invasion of Poland.

According to reliable information reaching London recently, the underground press in Poland has reached the imposing figure of nearly 150 publications of various types. Here are some of their titles: "Trybuna Ludów" (The Tribune of Peoples); "Polska w Walce" (Poland fights on); "Wiadomości Polskie" (Polish News); "Jutro" (To-morrow), etc.

These publications vary in size, layout and technical preparation, but they duly perform their duty of keeping the population of Poland abreast with the principal war events, and, especially, in steeling its resistance.

Thus, side by side with pocket-size one-page communiqués which are easy to read and quick to destroy, more ambitious publications dealing with the most important political and economic topics of the day, are regularly making their appearance. London B.B.C. broadcasts, "monitored" under risks of death, supply the chief source of information for these clandestine newspapers, magazines and bulletins. Some of them display a high degree of typographical excellence and even publish photographs; as for instance, a picture of Mr. Churchill whilst on a visit to the Polish troops in Scotland, which appeared in a secret paper in Poland only a few weeks after the visit had taken place. Satirical publications also manage to survive. S. KLECZKOWSKI

(Former Warsaw correspondent, *Daily Mail*).
47 Portland Place,

[Mrs. Castonier's article made no claim to be comprehensive. Poland's underground press needs an article to itself.—ED. "*N.S. & N.*"]

FUEL RATIONING

SIR,—I read your commentary under the striking title "God's Frozen People" with keen interest.

There can be no doubt about the rightness of your analysis of the underlying causes of the suspicion and resentment with which the idea of fuel rationing has been regarded by working people on the one hand and by the mineowners on the other hand. But since we are to have fuel rationing, Sir William Beveridge's scheme deserves high praise. Not only has great care been taken to allow for special needs—e.g. climatic, industrial and medical; to adjust equitably between the country and the town; to be fair to individuals and households—but the scheme should so operate that, with proper distribution, "millions of small fuel users" are better off next winter than they were last winter, while the most drastic cuts will be for houses of more than seven rooms not fully occupied. In this connection it is interesting to note that a particularly useful and pleasant meeting between Sir William Beveridge and the representative women's organisations convened to consult with him was reported in the *Daily Telegraph* (May 1st), under the heading "Sir William Beveridge heckled," in such words as ". . . a score of women crowded into Sir William Beveridge's office . . . and cross-examined him . . .," with a reference to "heated discussion" which is nonsense, either as a pun or a statement of fact. Is it not significant that this misrepresentation comes from a newspaper which is widely read by just the people who may have to do without luxury heating next winter? IRENE T. BARCLAY

NEW WORLDS FOR OLD

SIR,—Your suggestion that the international organisation of the production and marketing of certain primary products was designed mainly "to sweat the primary producer, especially if he belonged to the colonial or tropical peoples, and to sell dear to the consumer," is, so far as one of the products you mention is concerned—namely tea—a travesty of the facts.

International control of tea by the Indian, Ceylon and Netherlands East Indies Governments and producers was introduced in 1933 to save the industry, on which the livelihood of hundreds of thousands of workers depended, from complete ruin as the result of unplanned production. The world market was being swamped with quantities of tea far beyond world demand at any price, however low. While production had immediately to be controlled to bring about an equilibrium between world supply and demand, the Governments and producers concerned concentrated from the outset on efforts to expand the world market for tea. The producers, using Government machinery, taxed themselves to raise a very large annual sum which has been most successfully used to increase the demand for, and to improve the marketing of, their product in different parts of the world. Any attempt, through restricting supplies, unduly to raise the price of tea to the consumer would obviously have been to defeat the producers' basic aim of expanding consumption, apart from the close watching brief held by the Governments concerned to see that no abuse was made of the powers conferred through Government legislation.

In practice, the results of the international tea control, and of the market expansion activities which form an integral part of it, have been to maintain prices at a level which have generally allowed a reasonable profit for the efficient producer, while providing the con-

sumer with tea at a stable price low enough to encourage greater consumption (and well below former prices obtaining in times of unplanned production in the 'twenties); largely to eliminate speculation; and to increase demand in many important markets, some of the most striking increases being among the native peoples of the producing countries themselves—India, Ceylon and Java-Sumatra.

Some of us believe that the tea producing industry has made a valuable and practical contribution, through the control and market expansion schemes that it has successfully operated for nearly ten years, to the planning of "new worlds for old"—a contribution that deserves something better than the slighting reference in your article. This surely gives a distorted impression, even though your strictures are modified by an afterthought that tea has been the best managed of the "cartels." GERVAS HUXLEY

THE PROBLEM OF MR. CHURCHILL

SIR,—After reading his article on Churchill, one might well write on the problem of Mr. Laski. Why should he feel disappointment at Churchill's lack of enthusiasm in working for a social revolution on the Continent? Why should he assume that the aims of the Conservative Party in this war can be the same as those of the Labour movement? They may both at present run parallel in desiring the defeat of Germany, but after that defeat they must of necessity become divergent and oppositionary. Both Mr. Churchill and the Party he leads have always consistently opposed the growth of Socialism wherever it has arisen, and to expect in them now a desire to alter fundamentally the complexion of the capitalist system is sheer nonsense or dangerous utopianism. Mr. Laski knows very well indeed that only the working-class movement can be interested in making the appeal for a Continental mass uprising on a Socialist basis, and the sooner he gives up hoping that Conservatives will lead Communist revolutions the better. J. DEANER

THE U.S.S.R. AND I.L.O.

SIR,—I observe that your Industrial Correspondent says this week that the I.L.O. includes the Soviet Union. This is a mistake.

After the League of Nations had expelled the Soviet Union, the Governing Body of the I.L.O. met (in January 1940) and declared that the Soviet Union had ceased to be a member of the I.L.O.

I remember this very well, as, being a correspondent accredited to the League at the time, I contrasted the efforts which had been made, when Germany, Italy and Japan had successively left the League, to persuade them to retain membership of the I.L.O.

85, Fleet Street, E.C.4. ANDREW ROTHSTEIN

CHILD CRUELTY

SIR,—I would like to draw your attention to some of the activities of the children of my neighbourhood. They, boys and girls alike, are keenly interested in birds' nests and few can refrain from taking some of the eggs. For many, however, the joy is in finding a nest of little birds not yet able to fly. They pick out their eyes with pins, stick pins into them for different purposes, each rivalling the other in ingenuity. They cut off the heads of the fledgelings with old razor blades carried for the purpose, and then put the headless birds back in the nest to surprise the mother bird. Throw-ball with them is another sport, and in one place near the railway they cut off the legs of the little birds and place them on the line before a train comes along.

I do not think these practices will be confined to one district, and this perversion in the minds of the young must have a cause which might be profitably investigated. The ill-treatment of birds may seem negligible in a world at war, but it is perturbing to know that our future men and women find such delight in cruelty. MARGARET W. BAILLIE

[We doubt whether this appalling picture represents common practice and attitude of mind. Are these small vandals, as some suggest, the product of the town mentality of evacuees? If such horrors are really growing, teachers in schools and the B.B.C. in the Children's Hour seem to have another important job in front of them.—ED., *N.S. & N.*]

CIVILISATION

SIR,—Frankly, I was somewhat surprised to find when I opened my NEW STATESMAN AND NATION this morning that the only appropriate comment that you could find to make on the Baedeker reprisal raids was that this question raised "many hares." I thought that most of these hares had been caught and chewed long ago.

You ask, "How far is civilisation dependent on the bricks and stone and beauty of the past?" and "How far can the essential continuity of ideas survive physical destruction?" I thought that amongst other things Britain was fighting for culture. To preserve that culture, it matters not a whit how many of our historic buildings go—indeed, their loss strengthens the consciousness of what they stand for. But for ourselves to bomb enemy historic buildings—and to acknowledge the fact—is quite another matter. It means that although "civilisation died on September 3rd, 1939," we are making doubly certain that it shall never survive.

Further, it is not a case, as Critic's American friend seems to think, of "when we have won we shall have to build another, that's all," for we are dealing with values and not bricks and mortar, and if we condone the destruction of cultural symbols, we may find ourselves as incapable of building another civilisation after the war as the Nazis. "The essential continuity of ideas" will certainly survive physical destruction; how much the condonance of any kind of indiscriminate destruction will make the survival of such ideas possible is an extremely debatable matter.

13 Wedderburn Road, N.W.3. T. G. F. WEST

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI

SIR,—I have been a little perplexed by the dis paragements of Dante Gabriel Rossetti that have been appearing in your columns lately. He died when I was fourteen and I was never so fortunate as to set eyes on him. But I knew many of his friends and associates intimately. They all spoke of him with the deepest admiration, some of them with a kind of awe. To Burne-Jones he was a hero, to Arthur Hughes he was pure gold. This may have been extravagant. He no doubt had defects that increased with age, but his virtues outweighed them, and one of these was kindness.

Mr. Harry Ballam has been misled by the errors and innuendoes in the late Violet Hunt's unsavoury compilation. Mrs. Angeli, Rossetti's niece, exposed some of these in a devastating article when the book appeared. There is much evidence that Rossetti was devoted to Elizabeth Siddal, and that so far from damping her talents as a painter and verse writer, he brought them into being. She was consumptive from the beginning. Rossetti made very numerous drawings of her. They are among the most beautiful drawings of the period, with none of his later mannerisms. My view of his early poems is diametrically opposite to that of your correspondent, but I will not cross swords with him on this point, or refer to three obvious inaccuracies in his letter.

SYDNEY COCKERELL

DESPORTES

SIR,—Was Mr. Raymond Mortimer so overcome by receiving "some hundred and fifty" entries for his competition that he has jumped a corresponding number of years, to confuse Desportes (1546–1606) with that dreary dramatist, Destouches (1680–1754)?

Elgin Lodge, Windsor. ARTHUR RACE

[Mr. Mortimer writes: "Why, having looked out Desportes' dates, did I substitute for his name that of Destouches? I blame my subconscious for shying from a name so like that of Reynaud's sinister *Contesse*!"—ED. *N.S. & N.*]

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JONATHAN CAPE

BOOKS IN GENERAL

ONE of the rewards of having a bad memory is that one can read an encyclopaedia for pleasure and without seriously disturbing that rich subsoil of pure ignorance upon which the mind—a mind like mine, anyhow—so happily reposes. I have been getting this happiness from an enormous reference book *The Oxford Companion to American Literature*, by James D. Hart (Oxford, 28*s*.), reading, jumping about from item to item and comfortably forgetting as I go. Wonderfully large, exhaustive and terse, this mammoth records alphabetically every American writer and book with any faint claim to interest from 1622 to 1940 and even has an excuse for invading Spanish biography and bibliography with notes on figures like Bernal Diaz and Nunez Cabeza de Vaca. And it contains hundreds of summaries of the plots of plays, poems and novels. The compiler is conscientiously undiscriminating. Here, for example, carefully abstracted from the Jamesian mystery and looking awkwardly naked, is the plot of *The Spoils of Poynton*. Turn the page, and, with grim impartiality, is presented the plot of an unimportant novel by that interesting forerunner of the socially-minded novelists, Frank Norris. Further back, the compiler puts all critics secretly in his debt by managing to extract the story of Wm. Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury*, a minor feat of literary research. One picks up an enormous collection of odds and ends from a book like this, the unimportant things that always stick in the mind: the books Kipling wrote with his American brother-in-law, the date when James Branch Cabell dropped his first name and when W. H. Wright gave up writing on Nietzsche and modern painting to become Van Dine, the famous detective story writer. One discovers also why one can't read James Russell Lowell any more, and who wrote "Make me a child again just for to-night" (or is it "just for a day"? that seems more likely. Already I have forgotten the name). Everything is here, as the publishers say, from *Abie's Irish Rose* to *Zury, the Meanest Man in Spring County*.

In addition to this kind of information, the *Companion* provides a huge, fascinating and really valuable number of notes on the American background, from which an instructive picture can be formed. There are, for example, a few lines on things like the Volstead Act, the beliefs of the Millerites and the difference between the 2nd and 7th day Adventists, on carpet baggers, mugwumps, bunkum—American politics have played a great part in the picturesque side of popular culture—on things like the showboats, the beginnings of the cinema, whose first theatres were called "nickelodeons," on the American folklore which sprang from the lumber-camps and the mining trails, on best sellers, uplift societies, and that European invention "the stream of consciousness," which in American fiction unhappily became a stream of conscientiousness. To any student of literature the book must be invaluable: to the irresponsible reader it is like a visit to one of the gaudier political conventions in Chicago or a walk round the World Fair.

I have been trying to remember and define my earliest impressions of American literature. Three things stand out: an impression that American writers "took things easy," that adventure was a family affair instead of something lonely—the Indians broke in on family life—that neighbourliness was considered a very great virtue. These things were a little disconcerting. Far more disconcerting, not to say incomprehensible, was the nostalgia for the future—instead of our nostalgia for the past—and this embarrassing writing with the pedal down would be broken by a crackle of shattering cynicism. Another impression was the only half-pleasing one that American sentiment, except in the Southern writers one came across, had no link with snobbery. One has had the impression—is it a false one?—that in their sentimental moments the heroes and heroines of Victorian fiction were covertly and imperceptibly going up in the world. In American fiction sentiment seemed to be there to make us all alike; in English fiction, to distinguish us one from the other. A good standard example of American sentimental habit is provided by that extraordinary best seller of the early Socialist movement, Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward*. As for neighbourliness—the *Fraternité* of the revolutionary slogan—I do not believe this has ever been considered a great virtue in English life.

My own first search in this book was for the name of Josh Billings, the cracker-box philosopher, whose shrewd, hard, homely sayings used to reach England in the form of texts. The commercial classes, the dealers, never had to apologise for themselves in America, and Billings, like the author of the delightful *Letters of a Self-made Merchant to his Son*—which I have not been able to trace in the *Companion*—was in that strong tradition of American writing which has Benjamin Franklin's *Poor Richard's Almanack* as its source: "The Cat in gloves catches no Mice," as poor Richard says, "and by diligence and Patience the Mouse ate in two the Cable." It is mean, pawky proverbial writing and grows into the unlettered humour of Huck Finn's "low down orneryness." Thackeray used comic misspellings in order to laugh at butlers; the Americans used these distortions in order to laugh at the job of making a civilisation. This vernacular humour was used by Lowell in *The Biglow Papers* for the purposes of political satire—we forget how intensely politically-minded Americans are, and in Mr. G. K. Chesterton's parish sense—where a character like Private Birdofredom Sawin made picturesque comments: "Ninepence a day fer killin' folks comes kind o' low fer murder."

For a long time America was ashamed of its exports of popular culture—one can read how Boston was shocked at us for not being shocked at Mark Twain—but in the last 30 years, there has been a change in the outward and inward cultural traffic across the Atlantic. We have to come to bow to the American highbrow; and, since the influence of immigration, America has become much more aware of its own popular culture. But do we still import the American idealists? I am thinking particularly of Emerson and the lesser world of vague, metaphysically-minded perfectionists who culminated, I suppose, politically in Woodrow Wilson, and whose processes are defined in an excellent essay by Van Wyck Brooks in "Our Poets" (*American Critical Essays*. Edited by Norman Foerster, The World's Classics):

> So much truth, so much talent, so much of the American character is involved in that queer miasmatical group of lunar phenomena, in which philosophy, self culture, politics, art, social reform and religion were all mixed up and all felt to be, in some vague way, the same thing.

I am afraid that the middling kind of English reader always falls for this American export, without understanding how he misinterprets it. If he thought for long about the affairs of the Transcendentalist movement, he would have noted that there was more than met the eye behind the inability of those people to connect theory with practice. The theory was not meant to be put in practice. "Society," wrote Emerson in his essay on Self-Reliance, "is everywhere in conspiracy against the manhood of every one of its members." This very American doctrine, which reads like something out of anarchism, and not from the mouth of a liberal idealist, has meant in practice that every American feels justified in stealing a march on the enemy and in conspiring against the manhood of the State, and indeed against all its institutions.

There was a deep irresponsibility in American idealism, an irresponsibility which multiplied its sects and revealed, in figures as eminent as Emerson's or as smart as Dr. Buchman's, a repugnance to social conscience.

> No European can exist without a thousand subterranean relationships; but Americans can so exist, Americans do so exist. Edison, for example, resembles Poe as a purely inventive mathematical intellect and with Edison, as with Poe, you feel that some electric fluid takes the place of blood.

Thus writes Van Wyck Brooks. There is no "blood contact," as Lawrence would have said. Faith, in American religions, is indistinguishable from its rewards; and they are the rewards of rebellion. What American idealism did was to license the American's interests and his personality—that is to say, to add to American individualism; and Emerson became, as it were, the business-man's justification. His texts were hung up in the Sales Manager's Office. This has caused disillusion among the English addicts who found in writers like Emerson a sort of Carlyle with the native sting removed, and, in Thoreau, a Rousseau made safe for Puritans. Yet *was* idealism the only attraction of the New England school, indeed of all the American writers of the nineteenth century, or was it that we really did feel a relief in meeting men who could "take things easy"? America takes a difficult, hemmed-in man like Cobbett who, like any other Englishman, can't stop talking about liberty, and provides him with living space and cash—his liberty, in fact, in concrete terms. One felt about all the idealist writers that they had living space, that they were not cramped—nor indeed were they stimulated—by class, that they were just easily themselves. It would be hard to exaggerate the release that American idealism brought to the white-collared English of the commercial classes, who stand in some terror of the intellect and are inhibited by their class position; even though America sold them out after the last war. The same release has been given by American popular culture to the masses. And to the intellectuals also—for it is characteristic of American influence that the American reporters, like Hemingway, did more to crystallise and popularise the pre-war mood of Byronism than any European.

Americans are always wary of their idealist tendency. Hawthorne—a writer who ought to be read again—walked suspiciously around the edge of Brook Farm. But Brook Farms, with or without sects, are a common part of American rebellion. The *Oxford Companion* has notes on many of these ventures. There was the Harmony society—which called another of its settlements Economy—and which took the usual course. Communal life, disruption by the tempter, the disappearance of the funds, a lone stand by extremists who seem very frequently to believe that celibacy will somehow miraculously increase their numbers. The Zoar community is another. Such societies were, of course, the offspring of the revolutionary ideas of the beginning of the nineteenth century, but the tendency seems to remain. Upton Sinclair started a communal experiment for writers in New Jersey, and Sinclair Lewis was one of the household workers who "were treated as equals by the residents." The fact is that such groups in American life reflect the same spirit of rebellion, and it seems as though they replace the protective and aggresive functions of class.

An aspect of American life that is little known in England is the folk culture which grew up on the frontier and in the camps. It comes out chiefly in the tall stories told by the camp fire and in the gradual creation of a race of mythical wonder-workers and childish giants. There is Paul Bunyan, the hero of the lumberjacks, who is supposed to have carved the Grand Canyon and to have invented a hot cake griddle, greased by flunkies who skated on it with sides of bacon strapped to their feet! One winter it was so cold that his oaths froze on the air, thawing out on the Fourth of July with a great din. Mike Fink and Tony Beaver are two more of these mythical figures, who spread a cult of grotesque exaggeration which has been a rich vein in American humour. But it appears to have died when advancing civilisation ironed out the frontier life; or rather to have changed. For, to the immigrant—as the work of a writer like Saroyan shows—America must at some time always be a spiritual frontier town, breaking down all his past, all his values, leaving him astonished, as the earliest Americans must have been also, with himself as his sole possession.

V. S. PRITCHETT

SIR ROBERT PEEL

The Life and Times of Sir Robert Peel. By SIR TRESHAM LEVER. *Allen & Unwin.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

A life of Sir Robert Peel must be nothing but the history of a political career. Peel entered Parliament at the age of 21, and for the remaining forty-one years of his life he remained a Member of Parliament and thought of little but politics. His one pleasure was shooting; he never made an intimate friend; and his awkward manner in society made him only feel at ease in the privacy of his home. His figure was solid, his fortune was solid, and he possessed all the solid virtues without a grain of genius in him. Such men's lives are dull, for posterity, except for their share in the government of the country. Sir Tresham Lever has been wise therefore to extend the scope of his book, beyond mere politics, and to include the economic and social background of the period.

It was an uneasy period. The *douceur de vivre* had gone, not only for the French *noblesse*, but for everyone, in 1789. The statesmen of Europe were faced with the terrific object-lesson of the French Revolution; and yet nobody could agree as to what it meant. Some, like Metternich, thought Louis XVI was a fool to start the ball of Reform rolling, as it was bound to gain momentum and had no brakes. This was a plausible but desperate hypothesis, as it fossilised all government. It was Louis XV all over again. "*Après moi, le deluge*"—with no guarantee that this time it would be *après moi*. Yet if all idea of Reform was not rejected, how could it be stopped in the right place? Opinions differed as to the position of the right place, but Tories, Whigs, Liberals and Radicals were unanimous that Reform must stop somewhere. No one wanted to end with a Napoleonic dictator, according to the French precedent. But where *were* the brakes?

This fear of slipping over a precipice paralysed the desire for progressive institutions in every country, although in England there need have been no anxiety whatever. The English had evolved a two-party pendulum of government, which automatically slows up the machine. When each party has to base its hopes of office on coaxing over some supporters of its rival, its eyes are ever turned inwards to the dubious centre and never outwards to the enthusiastic extremists; and the balance of power is always with moderate-minded men. In England there was need for an accelerator rather than a brake, to keep up with the times.

At Sir Robert Peel's baptism in 1788, his father expressed the hope that his son might "tread in the footsteps of the immortal Pitt." His son did indeed follow Pitt, but oh! so slowly. Pitt was in favour of Catholic Emancipation and a Reform Bill. Twenty-three years after Pitt's death Peel became reconciled to Catholic Emancipation, six years later he swallowed the Reform Bill in the Tamworth Manifesto, and in 1842 he re-imposed the income-tax which Pitt had invented in 1798. It is not for this tardy acceptance of the inevitable that Peel is remembered, but for the great act of his career, the Repeal of the Corn Laws.

This was not the "Great Betrayal" as Disraeli pretended to think, but the vindication of a life-long habit of mind, unoriginal, unadventurous, but always honest, well-meaning, courageous and open to conviction. It is hard to find a more dramatic day in Parliamentary history than March 13, 1845, when Cobden made the speech of his life against the Corn Laws. Peel listened to the argument with the greatest attention occasionally taking notes for his reply. Suddenly his mind was made up. He crumpled the paper in his hand and tossed it aside; then turned to Sidney Herbert and said, "You must answer this, for I cannot." That moment ensured 50 years of material prosperity to Victorian England. It was a decision in thorough keeping with Peel's character, which was that of a competent managing director. His father was a successful cotton-manufacturer, and the son ran England as he would have run a cotton-mill. As long as the machinery ran smoothly, the employees were satisfied and the budget showed a profit, the management should not interfere. Only if production was falling off was there need for a change. Then you called in expert advice and improved the machinery, radically if necessary: just as old Sir Robert Peel, his father, had introduced the spinning mule and the spinning jenny into his factories and thereby made a fortune.

The first half of the nineteenth century is heavily documented, and Sir Tresham Lever has managed to condense much of the vast material available into his study of the period. Nine or ten biographies of Peel have already been written, but the last was published in 1928, and since then a few new facts have come to light. Naturally the book is written from a Conservative point of view and Sir Tresham treats Sir Robert with all the respect due to a distinguished leader of the party. Peel was eminently worthy of respect as even his contemporary political opponents recognised. No one but Disraeli ever sneered at him; and Disraeli did so from spite, not from conviction. But party ties often prevent the most respectable characters from rendering the best service to their country. It is well to explain, but better not to condone, Peel's behaviour over Catholic Emancipation; it did him no credit. Yet Sir Tresham would like to justify even that.

Charles Arbuthnot once told a story how, many years before, when he was Secretary to the Treasury, old Sir Robert Peel came to him in great anxiety as he feared his son was going over to the Whigs and would "be for ever lost to the party." Old Sir Robert was a bigoted Tory: and young Sir Robert was a dutiful son and always inclined to take ready-made opinions. Perhaps he never realised till the end of his life what his own political beliefs implied. Sir Tresham does not mention this story, but one wonders what he would have made of his hero, had he joined the Whigs in 1822. After all he *did* join the Whigs in 1846, and if Arbuthnot tells the truth, may have sailed his whole political life under false colours.

The style of the book is generally clear and straightforward, with only an occasional lapse into the colourful fine writing demanded of modern biographers.

RALPH PARTRIDGE

NEW NOVELS

Three Blossoms of Chang-An. By KEITH WEST. *Cresset Press.* 8*s.*

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The Loving Heart. By ELIZABETH INGLIS-JONES. *Faber.* 8*s.*

Spenlove in Arcady. By WILLIAM MCFEE. *Faber.* 10*s.* 6*d.*

The Hill of Doves. By STUART CLOETE. *Collins.* 10*s.* 6*d.*

The Romance of a Nose. By LORD BERNERS. *Constable.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

The Great Grab. By THOMAS BURTON. *Constable.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

Thunder in the Earth. By EDWIN LANHAM. *Heinemann.* 10*s.* 6*d.*

Perhaps it is the unsettling effect of double summertime, or perhaps there is some other reason, but most of the novels about at the moment suggest that the season is far advanced—they are, in fact, classifiable as holiday fiction. Little can be said about this genre, which is above, beyond, or beneath, criticism—use which adjec-

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The Hogarth Press

would like to draw your attention again to the small but carefully selected list of books they have prepared for the first six months of 1942. To begin with, there is the new book of posthumous essays by Virginia Woolf, *The Death of the Moth* (9*s.*), to be published early in June; and at the same time Dr. Theodor Reik's reminiscences of his great teacher, *From Thirty Years with Freud* (12*s.* 6*d.*). In March they published three books of poetry, each remarkable in its own distinct way: *Work in Hand* (2*s.* 6*d.*) by Robert Graves, Norman Cameron, and Alan Hodge; *Aftermath* (5*s.*) by R. C. Trevelyan; and *Poets of Tomorrow III* (6*s.*). And finally there is the first volume of *Daylight* (6*s.*), a new venture devoted to European arts and letters. Hogarth Press books are a necessity to thinking people in wartime.

tive you fancy—and in dealing with it the critic can only behave like a kind uncle passing round the chocolate box, pointing out which are the creams, which the hard centres, and which the plain. The *Three Blossoms of Chang-An* is a blend of the manuscript-found-in-a-tomb technique of the Rider Haggard school, with Kai Lung chinoiseries, and the story is concerned with the love affairs of a provincial magistrate: this is a pink and highly scented cream. *Young Art and Old Hector* is a series of episodes in a Highland childhood, redolent of Celtic charm, which should bring a tear and twinkle to every Scottish eye. The southerner is likely to think that Art is an unusually slappable child. Another soft centre. *Portrait of a Lady in Love* is a ball of pure marzipan painted and moulded to look like a bitter tough nut; the marzipan is, however, of excellent quality and there are some good jokes. *The Loving Heart* is described on the wrapper as *concerned with the relationship between a young man of good family and the middle-aged widow of a suburban builder*, which is just what it is. A soft and extremely sweet cream with a faint but disagreeable after-taste of snobbery and anti-Semitism. In *Spenlove in Arcady* Mr. McFee runs his hero hard aground in New England in the middle of a tough literary push busy with the bed and the bottle. Followers of Spenlove's career will be surprised to find him settling down with a dipsomaniac for the companion of his years of retirement. (It is interesting to note that Spenlove in his age and experience takes a lady for a romantic week-end on a small cabin-cruiser; perhaps owing to age and experience he makes it a success, but in real life this is a mistake very young men make only once.) The salty tang associated with Spenlove is absent: this is a soft centre with a washy flavour of *eau sucrée*. *The Hill of Doves* is love among the Boers, who are here represented as a sort of wooden doll endowed with the simpler human faculties. A couple of incredibly restrained young persons bring their love to fruition amid the events leading up to Majuba and the false peace that followed. Mr. Cloete's desire to give offence to nobody in dealing with this regrettable episode in South African history leads to the usual fate of those who follow the middle path. This one is plain. Lord Berners' busy pen will be earning him the title of "The Stakhanov of Fantasy" if he continues to keep up his present rate of output. This quarter's offering is *The Romance of a Nose*, a pretty piece about Caesar and Cleopatra and plastic surgery. Lord Berners follows Shaw in making Cleopatra a giggling schoolgirl with a taste for a hearty romp, but goes further in putting the whole thing in terms of a country-house school room:

> "I want to go away," he sobbed; "everyone is against me here."
>
> "There!" said Cleopatra, turning to Caesar, "do you think a silly cry-baby like that is worthy to rule over Egypt?"
>
> Caesar raised his hands in a gesture of despair and strode from the room. The Queen made a grimace at her brother and followed him.

One feels that when Miss Caesar goes to her next place as Governess, something will be said about discipline in her references. Some of the jokes are agreeable in a quiet way: a rather gummy caramel. The American offerings are hard-centred and crisp. *The Great Grab* is about a young doctor who marries into the curious crowd which helped President Harding carry the burdens of his high office. It is a nice, full-blooded and romantic piece of writing about the beginning of the Republican toboggan ride. The young Doctor is one of the people who tumbled off and got hurt. *Thunder in the Earth* is concerned with the oil-well business and is a model that all young writers with an eye on commercial success would be advised to follow; regularly spaced high spots provide fit climaxes for episodes of roughly even length; each episode is comprehensible by itself, and the whole is designed skilfully to make a film. Thus Novel, Serial and Film rights are provided for and one can but admire. The story is a colourful bit of hooey of no great moment, but the background of an oil-field in development is one which is both highly picturesque and unfamiliar to the English reader, who should derive considerable light entertainment from it.

ANTHONY P. WEST

SEARCHING FOR TRUTH IN RUSSIA

In Russia Now. By the RT. HON. SIR WALTER CITRINE. *Robert Hale.* 3*s.* 6*d.*

Sir Walter Citrine is a diarist. He notes the absence of hot water and towels in his Kuibyshev hotel with the same care as he describes the evacuation of part of the Soviet Government from Moscow. He mentions that Cripps gave him a bar of chocolate during the hungry, arduous journey with the same interest as he describes the exhausted soldier at the station who, though trampled, never stirred. He is the individual observer who records the trivial and the tremendous in the same paragraph of his journal. His method makes his story fascinating to read, rather like listening to a returned traveller whose anecdotes tell you as much about himself as about his journeys.

The charm of Sir Walter's jottings is also their weakness. However interesting it is to know that he had repeated difficulties in finding running water—and he mentions this in three consecutive chapters—such information is merely pleasant gossip; it's not the most important thing about Russia now. The spotlight on such personal hardships distracts from the sombre background of Russia's struggle and the importance of Sir Walter's mission to establish collaboration between the workers of Great Britain and the Soviet Union. His visit was a success, although, when it was made, the Soviet Union was passing through the black hours of military retreat. The success of the reciprocal visit by the Soviet Trade Unions was a consequence of Sir Walter's journey and of his efforts in this country.

The personal contact between him and Shvernik, head of the Russian Trade Union movement and chairman of the Council of Nationalities (Sir Walter refers to him rather curiously as Mr. Shvernik, whereas he calls most other Russians by the prefix "Comrade") has been of the greatest value in establishing the Anglo-Soviet Trade Union Committee, one of whose principal functions is to resist Nazi attempts to perpetuate mistrust between British and Russian workers.

The Trade Unions of the Soviet Union have the task of relating productive norms and wages to the budget of the U.S.S.R., which in turn makes a wage allocation determined by the Central Planning Committee according to the availability of goods and services for satisfying consumers' needs. As the statistical examination is carried out by their members, the Soviet Trade Unions fulfil the true function of Trade Unionism, namely to give workers a fair return for their labour. The Soviet Trade Union system has something of great value to teach the British Government and the British Trade Unions which, in their pursuit of increased money wages without direct relation to the distribution of goods and services, are pursuing inflationary rainbows. The Soviet Trade Unions are Trade Unions like the British Trade Unions because they fix wage agreements by the collective bargaining of their members; that they, unlike the British Trade Unions, always find agreement, is due to the absence of conflicting interests between them and

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the Soviet Government. Sir Walter, in stressing the opportunities for Trade Union collaboration, has shown what both countries may learn from each other in peace as well as war.

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MAURICE EDELMAN

THE LAST BREATHING SPACE

The Tragedy of Europe. By SIR JOHN MARRIOTT. *Blackie.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

The self-immolation of a whole culture is generally a spectacle to excite compassion and awe. The disappearance of Imperial Rome and all its Luna-Park ugliness, or of that Russian Caesarism with its tasteless splendours symbolised by Faberger's intolerable jewelled eggs, somehow contrive against all reason to kindle a spark of regret in us. But the death throes of our own age were ennobled by no splendour of any kind, no sense of that inevitable doom which is essential to real tragedy; the epoch that lay between the Treaty of Versailles and the German attack upon Poland was a sordid Gadarene scramble down toward destruction, without even the dignity of frenzy about it. The luckless swine, the speculators and unctuous politicians, the dictators in their moments of noisiest exaltation, all perceived the approaching lake of calamity, and professed to recoil in horror from it. But they went on justifying each yard of the descent with ingenious arguments and even with philosophies specially concocted for the purpose.

It is this constant and futile apprehension of disaster which lends to the late peace its peculiar atmosphere of squalid horror. The statesmen of the Vienna Congress, after twenty years of war, were not really interested in the prevention of future conflicts—the Holy Alliance was designed more to scotch Liberalism than to discourage international disputes—yet while accepting war as something no less inevitable than distemper in dogs, they contrived a peace settlement that prevented the repetition of a general European war for another century. The treaty-makers of Versailles, and their successors proclaimed as their main concern the abolition of the resort to arms; nor can we wholly doubt the sincerity of their intentions, for they were perfectly well aware that the comfortable *rentier* world they loved, the world where you began as a radical, and gracefully, gradually allowed yourself to be tamed by great ladies and diverting house parties, was too fragile to withstand another mighty shock in their lifetime. Yet they were helpless to prevent, indeed often encouraged, a progress toward a disaster which could probably have been avoided.

It is perhaps too early to attempt any explanation of their antics. Sir John Marriott in his latest book is wise enough in the main to play the part of unanalytical chronicler; he has produced a sort of "Statesman's Year Book" of calamity, which as he says in his preface, may be found convenient for purposes of reference. On one occasion, when talking of the Versailles settlement, he dares to hazard the opinion that the seeds of misfortune were sown in the peace treaties which attempted to reconcile extreme ethnographical nationalism with the new principle of international duty embodied in the Covenant of the League. But in the main he is content to employ his great scholarship and facile pen in an austere but very full record of futility. What nostalgia is conjured up by the events and the catchwords which he brings back to our somersaulting memories—the Zinoviev Letter, collective security, the Geneva Protocol, the Kellogg Pact, the happy junketings of a Stresemann, a Briand, an Austen Chamberlain by an Alpine lake! Those were the days when all of us who were called by our duties periodically to meetings of the League Council and Assembly, were far less interested in the creation of an international police force or Briand's crude scheme for a United States of Europe than we were in Primo de Rivera's inviting the League on one occasion to Madrid, where the night life was as gay as gay; or in the prospect of the League Headquarters being moved bodily from the well-scrubbed shores of Geneva to waltz-ridden Vienna.

Everybody is to blame. The successful men of the time, inflated like so many pathetic toads, we lesser fry who wisecracked and ran errands on the fringe of history, even Sir John Marriott himself, who speaking of the recent troubles in the West Indies, appears to think that political and economic grievances have nothing to do with each other. Indeed, he completely disregards the problem of economic and social instability which first gave the dictators their chance, and without the curing of which the menace of war will never be exorcised. For all that his book provides the best chronicle of the international collapse I have yet seen. Rightly, for instance, does he trace the outward beginning of trouble to the Japanese invasion of Manchuria in 1931. Certain parts of the picture he draws are inevitably distorted; despite his evident sympathy for Italy, he fails to emphasise, for instance, the manner in which H.M.G. by their indifference encouraged Mussolini in his belief that we would wink at the conquest of Abyssinia; the truth was the Cabinet at that time had eyes only for German rearmament; not even the present Foreign Secretary could be induced at the Stresa Conference of April 1935 to raise the Abyssinian question, which was finally relegated to a perfunctory conversation between a junior English and a junior Italian diplomat; nor probably would the Baldwin Government have suddenly plumped for sanctions against Italy a few months later, if it had not been for the straw ballot conducted by the League of Nations Union, which suggested that a full League policy would be a nice platform to go to the country on. But otherwise Sir John Marriott's book gives a full, cool picture of a terrifying period.

SIMON HARCOURT SMITH

FOR THE FIELD BOTANIST

The Rambler's Guide to Wild Flowers. By W. PERCY JONES, F.R.H.S. *Routledge.* 6*s.*

A Book of Common Flowers. By ROSE BRACHER. Illustrated by DOROTHY BROMBY. *Chameleon Books. Oxford Press.* 1*s.* 6*d.*

This year's sudden explosion of Spring after a long and frigid winter will have sent all those who like looking for wild flowers hurrying to hunt out their botany books. For even though the present limitation of travel prevents excursions to Irish bogs, Scotch mountains or Welsh slag-heaps—those favourite haunts of botanists—there is still great interest to be found in seeing the same flowers come up year after year in the same woods, yet differing in their distribution, size and profusion and following one another at varying rates of sequence. Each spring has its own pace, from a slow intermittent march of flowers between patches of apparent sterility to that amazing kaleidoscopic confusion when a late thaw brings everything bursting into bloom at the same glorious moment.

Ever since Bentham and Hooker published their *British Flora* in 1863 it has remained the Classic for the identification of wild flowers. By carefully following their progressively dichotomous system every flower can, in theory at least, be pinned down successfully. Failures are due either to lack of a proper magnifying glass with

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NATIONAL BANK OF INDIA LIMITED

MR. R. LANGFORD JAMES'S STATEMENT

THE following is a summary of a statement by the chairman, Mr. R. Langford James, which has been issued to the shareholders with the report and accounts to be submitted at the ordinary general meeting to be held on Tuesday, May 12.

In my last year's address to the shareholders I expressed some apprehension as to prospects for 1941. My fears, however, in regard to the bank's results were not justified, as the net profits—amounting to £487,738—closely approximate those of the previous year, after providing a substantially increased sum for taxation and after making full provision for bad and doubtful debts.

In order that there should be no undue delay in payment of the final dividend this was again declared in the form of a second interim but at the rate of 6 per cent. instead of 8 per cent., reducing the total dividend for the year from 16 per cent.—a rate at which it has stood for the past few years—to 14 per cent.

With regard to the balance sheet, the bank's total liabilities and assets are £5,000,000 higher than at the end of the previous year. On the liabilities side this is almost entirely accounted for by an increase in current, fixed deposit and other accounts, while amongst the assets, cash and bullion appear as £1,000,000 higher, British and Indian Government securities are nearly £3,000,000 up, and the figure representing bills of exchange shows an increase of £1,700,000 as compared with the previous year. The ratio of the combined items of cash and Government securities to the bank's total liability on current, fixed deposit and other accounts is 70 per cent., which indicates a sound position.

ASSOCIATED PORTLAND CEMENT MANUFACTURERS

ADEQUATE SUPPLIES

THE forty-third ordinary general meeting of the Associated Portland Cement Manufacturers, Limited, was held on April 30th in London.

Sir P. Malcolm Stewart, Bt. (chairman and one of the managing directors), said that the profit on trading amounted to £672,020, compared with £749,669 in the previous year, a reduction of £77,649, brought about by the excess of increased production costs over the advance in average selling price obtained. The board recommended a final dividend of 6½ per cent. on the Ordinary stock.

During the year under review they had effected aggregate deliveries of Blue Circle Portland cement which showed but a slight falling off compared with the previous year. At home problems of production had presented many difficulties. However, the works had been well maintained despite the shortage of some materials and supplies. The output of cement had at all times been equal to the demand. He would be grateful if customers would note that the quick return of jute sacks in a dry and undamaged condition materially helped the loading position. The attention of the directors had been drawn to statements that there were occasional shortages of cement. At no time had that actually been the fact.

Stockholders would, he was sure, join with the directors in expressing their thanks to all members of the staff and employees attached to the various departments of their business at the company's works and depots for their loyal support and co-operation throughout the arduous experiences of the past year.

The report was adopted.

Good things are scarce in wartime and supplies of

HOVIS

are restricted so please be patient if you are unable to get it as regularly as before.

Best Bakers Bake It.

which to distinguish the tiny characteristics of seed or bract, or else to the fact that some rare specimen found growing singly may exhibit fruit or flower but not both, and both may be necessary for certain identification.

Mr. Jones in his *Rambler's Guide to Wild Flowers* claims to have invented "an entirely new method," so simple that almost any flower can be named in a few moments. His system is not in fact essentially different from Bentham and Hooker's, but by using a more rough-and-ready short cut (admitting of certain exceptions) he arrives much more quickly at the Family or Genus. From this point his very clear tabulation should make it easy to reach the right answer simply by turning the pages until a complete correspondence of characteristics is found. Although plants that are exceptional, or present some special difficulties, will not respond easily to Mr. Jones's treatment, his system is carefully worked out and brings a remarkably quick identification in the case of orthodox flowers. This book will therefore be particularly useful to beginners, or on expeditions where a magnifying glass, etc., is not available. There is a good glossary and explanatory notes and diagrams, but no illustrations of the individual plants. It is a small book to go in the pocket, and could be used in conjunction with Sowerby's unsurpassed illustrations.

A Book of Common Flowers is an inviting introduction to field botany for children from about seven upwards. Only about 100 of the commoner plants are described, classed under their different habitats. There is even a chapter on wild flowers that grow in towns. The coloured pictures are adequate.

FRANCES BIRD

Week-end Competitions

No. 640

Set by Raymond Mortimer

A first prize of two guineas and a second prize of half a guinea are offered for Five Commandments, in not more than 16 lines of verse, addressed to a young portrait painter who wishes to earn at least £20,000 a year.

RULES—

1. Envelopes should be marked with the number of the Problem, in the top left-hand corner, and should be addressed to COMPETITIONS, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1. Solutions must reach the Editor by first post on Monday, May 18th.

2. The Editor's decision is final. He reserves the right to print in part or as a whole any matter sent in, whether it be awarded a prize or not. MSS. cannot be returned. When no entries reach the required standard no prize will be awarded.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 637

Set by Thomas Lowinsky

What answer Dr. Livingstone made to Stanley's famous remark is, I believe, unknown; and other celebrated meetings have been inadequately recorded. The usual prizes are offered for the opening remarks of both persons at any three of the following encounters: Adam and Eve; Europa and the Bull; Henry VIII and Anne of Cleves; Voltaire and Frederick the Great; Mme. de Pompadour and Boucher; Talleyrand and the Duke of Wellington; Byron and Shelley; Queen Victoria and the Empress Eugénie; Whistler and Wilde.

Report by Thomas Lowinsky

It is chiefly because Stanley's observation was so unpremeditated and uttered without any intention of being funny that it differs so greatly from those submitted by the entrants, who from the very nature of this competition, are forced into being consciously witty. Another dissimilarity between the explorer and them is that, whereas he was ceremonious and polite, they, almost to a man, are informally abusive. But then, there are many kinds of humour, the hackneyed "Doctor Livingstone I presume," being given less as a model than as an illustration; an illustration, however, that the majority disregards, for some send random remarks, others long conversations, none of which could be termed introductory. On the whole, the response is disappointing in quality if not in numbers, few thinking of more than one joke. Most of these single efforts are put into the mouths of either Adam and Eve or Europa and The Bull, Beings of mythology, they are made to address one another in singularly modern style, from Music-hall dirt to subtler attempts at Coward-cum-Lonsdale. In the Adam and Eve answers, the rib is the invariable motive; the fig-leaf being mentioned but once, doubtless because competitors remembered that this came later in their acquaintanceship.

From G. F. Plant, C.B.E., comes the innocuous:

Eve: "Who are you tickling?"

Adam: "My ribs, I presume."

And from Sir Robert Witt:

Europa: "May I have a ride?"

The Bull: "Yes with pleasure, by Jove. But be prepared to fall."

There is a realistic ring in the urban cry of A. J.'s Europa: "Lord, how I hate cows!"

Next in popularity come Whistler and Wilde, who are again and again ventriloquised into saying almost identical mots. Both of the prize-winners give neat examples. So does Sir Robert Witt:

Wilde: "Mr. Whistler, I believe? I hear that you paint?"

Whistler: "And, from the advertisements, I see that you write."

Hordes let themselves rip with Henry VIII and Anne of Cleves. The other suggested celebrities seem to have made small appeal. For example, there are thirty-seven quotations invented for Adam and Eve, three for Madame de Pompadour and Boucher, four for Talleyrand and Wellington, five for Frederick the Great and Voltaire. Only three answers come in French, Criticulous sending:

Frederick the Great: "Je m'ennuie, Voltaire."

Voltaire: "Cela ne me surprend pas, Sire. Chacun fait pour soi-même ce qu'il peut faire le mieux."

It is less difficult to settle upon the two prize-winners—they are immeasurably the most amusing—than to decide which of the two is the better. After hesitation, the first prize is awarded to "Little Billee."

FIRST PRIZE

Adam: "Shall we take a stroll round the garden?"

Eve: "Oh, yes! I do think it looks a lovesome place, God wot!"

Henry VIII (throwing up his hands, as he sees that the reality is worse than the picture): "Mon Dieu! My Mare!"

Anne of Cleves (puzzled): "Mais non, Henri; votre femme!"

Wilde: "Whistler! We meet at last! Give me a moment—I am in labour with an epigram for the occasion."

Whistler: "Ah, so you have been preparing it for nine months already!" "LITTLE BILLEE"

SECOND PRIZE

Adam (waking up after his "deep sleep," and seeing Eve): "Lord, Lord, was it for this that thy servant sacrificed a rib?"

Eve (with pre-serpentine cunning): "Let my Lord Adam tell unto me the story of his operation, yea, and shew forth the scars thereof that I may weep with him."

Europa (timidly): "If I get on your back, O Bull, will you promise not to come near me?"

Bull (grinning): "Don't be Hibernian, Europa. I'm not *that* kind of bull."

(Oscar Wilde is introduced to Whistler):

Wilde: "Your servant, Mr. Whistler."

Whistler: "Your master, Mr. Wilde."

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